



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
August 21 – 28, 2015

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Aboriginal Music Week brings 4 outdoor shows to North End

Free, outdoor shows designed to get families out to festivals, organizer says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 21, 2015 3:52 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 22, 2015 7:38 AM CT



Aboriginal Music Week is bringing indigenous artists to Winnipeg's North End as part of its seventh annual celebration of indigenous musicians.

The festival is hosting four free concerts in the area with the aim of getting young people in the community interested in live music and inspired to make their own.

"We want families to be able to walk to our concerts," said Alan Greyeyes, with Aboriginal Music Canada. "We are really interested in giving a live music experience to families who normally don't get to participate in bigger festivals."

One of the stages is at the Austin Street Festival, run by the North Point Douglas Women's Centre.



Singer-songwriter Ali Fontaine is one of six indigenous performers taking the stage at the Austin Street Festival. (Courtesy Ali Fontaine)

Singer-songwriter Ali Fontaine is one of six indigenous performers taking the stage there.

"My dream is to use music as a tool to talk about indigenous issues," said Fontaine.

The 21-year-old woman is from Sagkeeng First Nation, and first played Aboriginal Music Week when she was 16 years old. Now, she's a mentor to younger children for the festival.

"I started off when I was really young, and I always wished I had a mentor like that," she said. "A lot of the kids are really creative, and it was really awesome to see what they came up with."

Fontaine said she looks up to indigenous artists like Buffy Sainte-Marie and the C-Weed Band.

"I really think it's important to demonstrate that within our community, to other aboriginal folks, that excellence exists within our community, within our people," said Greyeyes.

Tara Campbell, a female MC from Saskatoon, came to Winnipeg to perform at the festival.

Campbell spent Friday beading with young people at the festival because she's also a jewelry designer.

"It's a passion of mine, so I feel it's my job to show these kids that they can be passionate too," said Campbell.

She said she wants to see something similar in her city.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/aboriginal-music-week-brings-4-outdoor-shows-to-north-end-1.3199948>

Aboriginal Music Week brings in NZ, Australian acts to mentor locals

Benny Walker, Tama Waipara in town to mentor local artists for Aboriginal Music Week

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 21, 2015 4:32 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 21, 2015 9:05 AM CT



Two indigenous artists from more 8,000 kilometres away are in Winnipeg to mentor local artists this week.

Australia's Benny Walker and New Zealand's Tama Waipara are in town to mentor the city's indigenous artists for Aboriginal Music Week.

"I find the people out here are incredible passionate about their people," said Walker, an indigenous singer-songwriter who has been nationally recognized in Australia. "It's great to connect with people on the other side of the world that can relate to what your people went through."



Benny Walker, of Australia, is in town this week to mentor local indigenous artists. (Jillian Taylor/CBC)

The program, partly funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, offers local artists five days of one-on-one meetings about how to break into foreign markets like Australia and New Zealand.

Waipara, a Maori musician, said New Zealand's indigenous community has a lot in common with Canada's.

"The connection is immediate and apparent. The stories link," said Waipara, who explained the Maori lost their language because of assimilation policies in New Zealand

and Australia. "In some ways, I think we, the Maori, are lucky in our experience with the colonizer – silly to say that word, but when I talk to other nations and hear their pain and brutal experience, we are still going through brutal experiences now."

Waipara said working with Canadian musicians has been humbling, and he's been inspired by the work Manitoba Music is doing in the province.

Both he and Walker are hoping to pay that inspiration forward.

"If [Winnipeggers] are interested in coming to Australia, I've opened the lines of communication between myself and them," said Walker. "There is always someone who has done something for me, and I am happy to help someone else build themselves a little bit."

Because of the nature of the Canada Council for the Arts grant, Walker and Waipara can't perform at the festival.

Despite that, Waipara will make an appearance at an open mic night at The Good Will on Friday night.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/aboriginal-music-week-brings-in-nz-australian-acts-to-mentor-locals-1.3198593>

First Nations artwork coming to Johnson Street parkade

[Adrian Chamberlain](#) / Times Colonist
August 22, 2015 06:00 AM



Woven Together, contemporary First Nations art, will adorn the outside of the Johnson Street parkade.
Photograph By Via City of Victoria

A Vancouver mother-and-son team will create a contemporary First Nations artwork for the exterior of the Johnson Street parkade.

Victoria city council accepted a proposal by Susan Point and Thomas Cannell of the Musqueam First Nation. Their artwork, Woven Together, will be installed in April.

The \$125,000 piece will celebrate the history of the Coast Salish people.

It will consist of multi-coloured, circular forms made of powder-coated aluminum. The centre will be made up of four eye-shaped motifs reminiscent of butterflies.

Woven Together will suggest such themes as the ability to accept chance, metamorphosis and the beauty of nature. It was one of 110 proposals the city received in response to a national call.

Point and Cannell are professional artists with more than 40 years of combined experience. Point has created works at the Vancouver International Airport and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Cannell's public art can be seen at Terra Nova Park in Richmond and at Deer Lake Park in Burnaby.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/first-nations-artwork-coming-to-johnson-street-parkade-1.2038195#sthash.IGJ2gJHq.dpuf>

Cree stories translated into English, fairy tales into Cree

Translated folklore from English and Cree could help bridge generation gap

By Lindsay Visitor, Corinne Smith, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 22, 2015 10:45 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 23, 2015 1:18 PM CT



1912 illustration of Goldilocks, originally from 'The Book of Knowledge.' (Creative Commons/The Book of Knowledge)

People enjoy legends, fables and fairy tales because they take us to different worlds, make us think about who we are, our values, and tell us something about the human condition.

Many elders in Eeyou Istchee in Quebec grew up hearing old legends shared among family and friends. But the younger generation is more familiar with modern fairy tales from Europe, or Walt Disney films.

Kevin Brousseau, a Cree Language Coordinator for the Cree Nation Government, is very aware of that generation and culture gap in storytelling.



Author Kevin Brousseau. (Submitted)

He thought it could be useful to translate Cree legends into English and modern fairy tales into Cree. Not only to bridge the generation gap between younger and older Crees, but also to make these stories more accessible to all people, regardless of their language skills.

Growing up, Brousseau said he didn't speak much Cree. His elders, including his grandmother, often only spoke Cree. He later studied linguistics. When he started his story translation project, translating Hansel and Gretel into Cree, he read it out loud to his grandmother to gauge her reaction.

"She was laughing about it," he said. "She thought it was really funny. She asked me where this story was from. She had actually thought it was a Cree story."

He has since translated dozens of stories, from English to Cree and back. He wrote down Cree legends shared by elder storytellers. Brousseau explored European folklore and fairy tales to translate them into Cree.

Some elements and nuances are lost in translation, especially from English to Cree. Certain animals and objects don't have Cree words to describe them, so Brousseau said he had to get creative.

In the Three Little Pigs, "they talk about one of the pigs going to the fair, and he's carrying a butter churn. I've never heard a word for 'butter churn' in Cree. Neither for a fair. So I ended up translating that as a 'mikushaan' [feast], and the little pig is carrying a pot."

Brousseau has translated 16 European fairy tales and fables into Cree, including Goldilocks, The Gingerbread Boy, The Lion and the Hare, and Little Red Riding Hood.

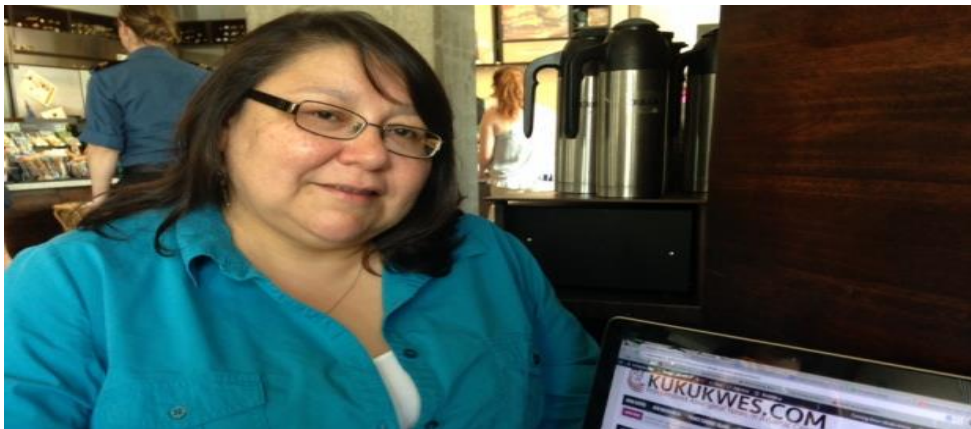
He's written down and translated five Cree legends into English.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-stories-translated-into-english-fairy-tales-into-cree-1.3200175>

Maureen Googoo launches news site to tell aboriginal stories

Googoo has worked in print, radio, TV and digital media for The Chronicle Herald, CBC and APTN

By Jack Julian, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 24, 2015 6:15 AM AT Last Updated: Aug 24, 2015 6:15 AM AT



Maureen Googoo has more than 20 years of experience in journalism. (Jack Julian/CBC)

A Mi'kmaq woman from Indian Brook launched an online news service Monday for aboriginal stories from Atlantic Canada.

Maureen Googoo is editor, publisher and sole reporter for kukukwes.com (pronounced GOO-goo-gwess).

"In Mi'kmaq, 'kukukwes' means 'owl', and that's kind of a variation of my own last name, Googoo. So that's what I decided to name my website," she said. "I figure if Arianna

Huffington can have her own website called 'The Huffington Post', why can't I have kukukwes.com?"

'No matter where I worked, I always came across somebody else who was setting the news agenda, telling me that stories from my community weren't that interesting' - *Maureen Googoo*

Googoo has over 20 years reporting experience. She's worked in print, radio, TV and digital media for The Chronicle Herald, CBC and APTN.

She's says she's looking forward to calling the editorial shots, chasing original stories sometimes overlooked by mainstream media.

"No matter where I worked, I always came across somebody else who was setting the news agenda, telling me that stories from my community weren't that interesting. And that was always very frustrating for me."

Googoo says mainstream media outlets all cover aboriginal news stories on occasion, but that creates a patchwork effect.

"There's no place where you can take all of those stories, and bring them all together in one place," she said. "And that's what I want to do. I want it to be one place where aboriginal people can go to find out what's going on in their communities."

Crowdfunding donations

Googoo has launched a crowdfunding effort to raise money for her news organization. She got the idea from Jesse Brown's podcast "Canadaland," and is using [Patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com) to collect donations.

Googoo says she needs supporters to contribute about \$1,500 a month to stay afloat. But she says all content will be available for free to anyone with an Internet connection.

Any additional money will be invested into research trips to reserves across the region.

"A lot of the aboriginal population in the Atlantic region is rural based. So you have to travel to rural communities to get their stories," Googoo said. "Some of them can be four hours away, some of them can be six hours away. So with more money I'll be able to get on the road to travel more."

Googoo says her initial goal is to write two original stories a week for the site. But today's launch includes a dozen stories she's been working on since June. Those include a feature on the closing ceremonies of the Mi'kmaw Summer Games and an update on the fraud trial of a former Sipekne'katik band administrator.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/maureen-googoo-launches-news-site-to-tell-aboriginal-stories-1.3200792>

Inuit move closer to a single writing system

Two-day gathering begins today in Iqaluit

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 25, 2015 5:31 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 25, 2015 5:31 AM CT



Two children read a book in Inuktitut. The writing on the book's cover is in syllabics. It's one of two widely-used writing systems in Inuktitut, along with roman orthography, which uses many of the same letters as English. (CBC)

A two-day gathering gets underway in Iqaluit today that will help move Inuit closer towards a single, unified writing system.

The Autausiq Inuktitut Titirauisq task force, launched by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national Inuit group, will spend the next two days discussing findings from a series of consultations that saw visits to three communities in Nunavik, three in the N.W.T.'s Inuvialuit region and six in Nunavut.

The goal is to come up with a recommendation to provincial, territorial and Inuit government recommendations on how to standardize the written Inuit language.

Right now, both the spoken and the written language vary widely across the four Inuit regional groups, from the N.W.T. to Labrador.

"We've counted up to 12 main dialects, and of course there are sub-dialects within those main dialects," says Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, who's been leading the task force since it was established.

The written language also varies widely, with some Inuit relying on syllabics originally brought in by missionaries, while others use roman orthography to transcribe the language.

The project came out of ITK's 2010 national strategy on Inuit education, which sought ways to improve the overall graduation rate. At the time, it sat at approximately 25 per cent.

"There are so many different writing systems being used that educational materials and resources are not easily shared between regions," Palluq-Cloutier said.

She says the goal of this week's summit is to clarify issues surrounding a unified language before the task force makes final decisions or recommendations.

Delegates at the meeting will represent all four Inuit regions of Canada. One delegate from Alaska and one from Greenland will also take part to share their experience.

The meeting, which is closed to the public, wraps up Wednesday.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-move-closer-to-a-single-writing-system-1.3202620>

Inuit carvers create a monument at Toronto's York University

Inuit legend of spirits playing soccer with a walrus skull was chosen for the Pan American Games

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 26, 2015 8:04 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 26, 2015 8:04 AM CT



Kuzy Curley of Cape Dorset and Ruben Komangapik of Pond Inlet are working on a monumental sculpture at Toronto's York University. 'When I first came here, I thought I felt like I was dreaming,' Curley says. 'I've been wanting to do a monument this big since I first started carving as a young boy.' (Tina Mackenzie/CBC)

Two Inuit carvers from Nunavut are living out their dream, working on a 26-tonne block of granite to create a traditional sculpture, which will be housed at Toronto's York University.

"When it first came here, I thought I felt like I was dreaming," said Cape Dorset's Kuzy Curley, one of the two artists working on the piece. "I've been wanting to do a monument this big since I first started carving as a young boy."

The team is collaborating on a 26-tonne block of granite to depict an Inuit legend about spirits playing soccer with a walrus skull. The design, called "Ahqahizu," was chosen to coincide with the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, which recently took place at the university.

"Sometimes when I go up against it, it's like: 'What did I get myself into?'" said Pond Inlet's Ruben Komangapik, the other artist working on the sculpture.

Carving the sculpture, said Curley, has been a learning experience, because usually he only works on small pieces and rarely works with a material as tough as granite.

Modern methods, traditional themes



Kuzy Curley of Cape Dorset and Ruben Komangapik of Pond Inlet are working on a monumental sculpture at Toronto's York University. 'When I first came here, I thought I felt like I was dreaming,' Curley says. 'I've been wanting to do a monument this big since I first started carving as a young boy.' (Tina Mackenzie/CBC)

"The methods have not always been traditional, but the content is traditional," said Komangapik who adds that his work often draws inspiration from traditional Inuit themes.

For the two artists the piece is a chance to not only showcase their art but also their Inuit culture.

"We want people to understand who we are and where we come from," says Curley, "It's very isolated area that we grew up in, there's no highways, you can only go there by planes."

"By doing something at this scale I hope it really inspires everybody else to look more into our culture and learn," adds Komangapik.

Komangapik says he's glad the piece will be situated in a university.

"There are more aboriginal people getting educated to a higher level and hopefully by seeing this it'll inspire them to keep going in their studies."

As part of the project, Curley and Komangapik are mentoring young students from the Jane and Finch community adjacent to York University. The high school students not only get to learn the basics of carving but they get to be exposed to Inuit culture.

"The whole world needs to learn about Inuit and for that we have chosen these people from the South so they can do work down the road and have knowledge of Inuit culture and heritage," says Curley.

Curley admits that working with students on such a big project was not easy.

"As Inuit carvers we do not draw, and for this piece it was little bit challenging for us to teach people that have so little experience in carving."

'Reattaching that voice'

The sculpture was funded as part of the Mobilizing Inuit Cultural Heritage project, an initiative with a goal to give Inuit artists a voice.

"We're all collaborating together in a variety of projects around these objectives of access, connection and creation to bring the Inuit voice out and back to the objects that we are familiar with" says Anna Hudson, an associate professor at York University who leads the Mobilizing Inuit Cultural Heritage project.

She says the voice of Inuit artists is often disassociated with their work in the South — work that lives in private collections or in museums.

"It's reattaching that voice and then creating opportunities where there is greater interaction and more knowledge and awareness of Inuit art as a vital presentation of Inuit culture, and a very important economic driver for the Northern territories and communities."

The sculpture is expected to be completed in the fall. The hope is that it will not only teach people in the South about Inuit art, but also create a bigger market for Northern artists.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-carvers-create-a-monument-at-toronto-s-york-university-1.3204217>

No Grammy trip for local producer

By Cam Fuller, The StarPhoenix August 27, 2015

The Grammy Awards prove to be elusive to the majority of members of the music industry, and that includes Kelly Parker of Turtle Island Music.

The Saskatoon record label that specializes in Aboriginal music caught the attention of The Recording Academy, which administers the Grammy Awards. It invited Parker to attend screening meetings in Los Angeles to choose contenders for the category of Native American, Hawaiian and Cajun/Zydeco music.

But it's a volunteer position and all the Academy pays for is accommodation. Parker would have had to pay for his own flights and meals.

It was a thrill to be asked, Parker said this week.

"One of the reasons I got into the music industry was to hopefully make a difference in the world. I was kind of overwhelmed. I thought wow, that is a great opportunity for Saskatchewan artists and First Nations and Metis artists to be represented."

The catch is that he can't afford it.

"It's one of those things. I wish I had a big bank account and was selling a lot of CDs. The digital download thing is not making up for the sale of CDs."

Parker asked Creative Saskatchewan to help fund the trip but to no avail.

"It's a big snub for me that Creative Saskatchewan isn't about to step up to the plate," said Parker.

John-Paul Ellson, Chief Executive Office of Creative Saskatchewan, said the trip doesn't meet the requirements of Creative Saskatchewan's funding programs. "Our main goal is commercial intent," said Ellson. The provincial government agency's mandate is "to stimulate the commercialization of creative products and bring Saskatchewan's creative talent to market."

Creative Saskatchewan also has a professional development grant but requests are juried and the next round doesn't start until Sept. 4, said Ellson. Parker counters that the L.A. appearance is itself a form of marketing, since he is in business.

"It doesn't matter where you are, it's another opportunity to sell yourself." In any case, Parker has had to turn down the Grammy offer. But he's pressing ahead on another front.

He'd like to see more Metis and First Nations people on the boards of organizations like Creative Saskatchewan and has requested a meeting with Mark Docherty, Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/entertainment/Grammy+trip+local+producer/11320701/story.html>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Manitobah Mukluks: Building success from the ground up

'This is a company that really is from the community,' says company founder Sean McCormick

By Karen Pauls, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 21, 2015 11:30 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 21, 2015 3:12 PM CT



When Sean McCormick started selling leather and fur to aboriginal artisans as a high school student, he never expected his company would someday be one of the fastest growing footwear brands in Canada — and a model of aboriginal business success.



Sean McCormick says he never expected his company would someday be one of the fastest-growing footwear brands in Canada. (CBC)

"The brand resonates with people," McCormick said from his office in inner-city Winnipeg.

"This is a company that really is from the community. I really am a Métis man growing up wearing mukluks; that's not an invented story. The product is unbelievable. These are the best winter boots in the world. There isn't a more Canadian piece of footwear than the mukluk."

Manitobah Mukluks manufactures and sells traditionally-beaded leather and fur slippers, shoes and boots, with and without rubber soles.



Kate Moss is seen in Notting Hill, wearing a pair of Manitobah Mukluks, before meeting an unidentified friend for lunch at Zucca in March 2004 in London. (Paul Ashby/Getty Images)



Actress Megan Fox is seen wearing Manitobah Mukluks as she arrives on the set of Zeroville in Los Angeles in November 2014. (Cousart/JFXimages/WENN.com)



Cindy Crawford wearing a pair of Manitobah Mukluks. (Supplied by Manitobah Mukluks)

They can be found in high-end retailers such as Holt Renfrew and Nordstrom, and they're sold in more than 50 countries through the company's online shop.

"It is a product we are proud to carry," Holt Renfrew's Alexandra Weston, director of brand strategy, said in a statement. She oversees the H Project, a unique in-store shop that promotes culture, craft and artisans from around the world.

"To have an incredibly well-made, high-quality product, where you know exactly who touched it, how many hands, is the height of luxury."

Indeed, the company's moccasins and mukluks have been seen on the feet of celebrities like Kate Moss, Jessica Biel and Cindy Crawford.

"The celebrity culture helps to drive the product awareness and that's what I'm trying to do. I want more people to know about Manitobah and its products and that really helps," McCormick said.

Something is obviously working.

Manitobah Mukluks is on last year's Profit 500 list of the fastest-growing companies in Canada, posting nearly 300 per cent growth between 2008 and 2013 — something that McCormick didn't expect when he started out in 1987.

"I imagined doing a million dollars in sales and we'll do a million dollars in a week now — in a good week — so the scale has just changed dramatically," he said.

But the company isn't just a business success, it's giving back to the community.

It provides an annual education bursary through The Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development that supports a select student studying finance or business at college or university.

Through its non-profit Storyboot Project, it creates partnerships with elders and artisans who create a limited collection of traditional mukluks and moccasins. The artist receives 100 per cent of the profits for every Storyboot footwear sold.

Reviving a dying art

The company also launched a new initiative last year called The Storyboot School, which gives young people the opportunity to learn how to make mukluks from aboriginal artisans.

"The Storyboot School is to revive an art that's dying," instructor Marilyn Tanner-Spence said at a recent session.



Through its non-profit Storyboot Project, Manitobah Mukluks creates partnerships with elders and artisans who create a limited collection of traditional mukluks and moccasins. The artist receives 100 per cent of the profits for every Storyboot footwear sold. (Karen Pauls)

"So many people are losing this. The elders are passing on, the skills are being lost, so ... we need to keep the art and culture alive."

On this day, Cheyenne Call and her brother Garrett are finishing their first pair of leather moccasins.

"I was a little nervous because I'm not much of a crafty person, but I guess you don't know until you try," Cheyenne said as she held up her pair of black leather and fur slippers.

Sitting beside her, Garrett said he'll be proud to wear his moccasins.

"The design is a logo from a skateboarding brand. It's my first time making it so I wanted it simple," he said.

"I think it's a skill I could carry on if I really wanted to, a skill to be carried on in the generations."

As she helps them tighten their stitches, Tanner-Spence beams.



Staff at Manitobah Mukluks sewing products in the company's Winnipeg plant. (Karen Pauls)

"I can't even tell you how happy I am to see this because when people learn to make something, they have a sense of pride," she said.

That's part of McCormick's motivation.

"We need positive examples in our [indigenous] community," he explained.

"We've got lots of unemployment, a ton of social issues, and education is part of getting out of that and so is economics. So Manitobah encapsulates that stuff. We're a private business but we're almost a social enterprise. We're giving kids and aboriginal kids, would-be entrepreneurs, an example of what's possible."

The commercial success has meant McCormick had to outsource some of the production to factories in China and Vietnam.

The company says it has [an aboriginal hiring policy](#) and 35 to 40 per cent of its staff are aboriginal, including 90 per cent of its administration.

McCormick hires as many First Nations workers as he can but said that's not always possible.

"Where we have non-aboriginal staff, it's also a very inclusive place to work, a very respectful place to work," he said.

"Whoever is working with Manitobah, we're all pulling for what the mission is and it doesn't really matter where you are from."



Garrett Call, left, and his sister Cheyenne make their first pair of leather moccasins at Manitobah Mukluks' Storyboot School in Winnipeg. (Karen Pauls)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitobah-mukluks-building-success-from-the-ground-up-1.3197893>

First Nations can provide less information, lawyer says

By Betty Ann Adam, The Starphoenix August 21, 2015

Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox has rejected the federal government's proposed solution to an accounting problem as "doctoring or cooking" the books.

Fox made the remark at a news conference on the second day of a federal court hearing where his First Nation is asking a judge to pause enforcement of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA) until its constitutional challenge of the law is resolved.

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and chiefs from five other regions were present to show solidarity with five First Nations involved in the case.

The act requires First Nations to publish consolidated financial statements, including chiefs' and councillors' salaries, online.

The First Nations in court have said such publication would cause irreparable harm because competitors and clients would see their private information. They say the government breached its duty to consult them before pushing through Bill C-27 and created a law that violates the Constitution and is discriminatory.

Government lawyer Michael Roberts said the court should order Onion Lake to abide by the law because it has not proven its people will be irreparably harmed if the statements are posted. He said Onion Lake provides far more detailed information than is required by the FNFTA.

First Nations can follow the law and still protect their sensitive financial information by submitting "highly aggregated" consolidated statements that "do not provide any meaningful detail" about their business activity, said another government lawyer, Daniel Kuhlen. Highly aggregated consolidated statements can, for example, lump together all revenue from government programs and all business income so there's no way to know how much comes from any individual source, Kuhlen said.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) accepts accounting rules that allow each First Nation to come up with its own way to aggregate to satisfy its own need for business privacy, he said.

It will also accept statements that have been so obscured that auditors provide only qualified approval, Kuhlen said, referring to evidence given by the government's expert accountant at a previous hearing. If a First Nation wishes to be transparent with its membership, it can have accountants prepare "special purpose reports" with details about

specific business activities, he said. The FNFTA does not require First Nations to provide their members with details, Kuhlen said.

"Is this legislation about chief and councillors' salaries or is it about transparency?" Fox said at the news conference. In court, Onion Lake lawyer Robert Hlandun said the government's evidence is misleading. It ignores the highly detailed financial information AANDC requires from anyone who signs a contribution agreement with the department, he said.

AANDC provides an annual reporting handbook outlining the guiding principles of the agreements. Barnes mused that it seems First Nations could ignore the department's handbook if it is at odds with the law and then see what happens.

At the news conference, Fox said Onion Lake has always provided detailed, unqualified statements and does not intend to change. When asked if having special reports prepared for members would cost his First Nation more in accounting fees, he said it would, but, "we're not about to be cooking or doctoring any books," Fox said.

In court, Kuhlen said the expert took issue with a suggestion the accounting rules hid information. Rather, he said, the nature of the accounting rules result in certain consequences. Roberts also argued that the public interest will be harmed if the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA) is not enforced. Judge Robert Barnes asked if the public interest would be harmed by the government enforcing an unconstitutional law upon treaty people.

Roberts said until the constitutionality of the law is decided by another court, the law of the land stands.

At the news conference, Bellegarde said leaders have no problem being accountable to their members and those who say otherwise are usually among the opposition that exists to any government.

He said the Canadian Taxpayers Federation is mistaken in its belief that First Nations receive individual taxpayer's money.

Companies that develop land and resources pay royalties and corporate taxes to provinces and Canada, and the government has a treaty obligation that precedes the provinces or Canada itself, he said.

"How much billions upon billions have been generated from the land and resource wealth through the GDP of this country? Where did the government get the land and resource wealth from? Indigenous peoples. That's what I mean by Indian moneys." he said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/First+Nations+provide+less+information+lawyer+says/11306620/story.html>

Daphne Bramham: First Nations chiefs' rich lives disrupted by disclosure

Perhaps the glare of transparency will keep greed in check

By Daphne Bramham, Vancouver Sun August 23, 2015



Semiahmoo Chief Willard Cook's (right) take-home pay was \$267,309 last year, while Coun. Joanne Charles (left) earned \$187,138.

Semiahmoo Chief Willard Cook has, arguably, the best political job in Canada.

Taking into account his tax-free status, Cook's take-home pay of \$267,309 was more than the prime minister's in 2013-14 and \$74,000 more than Premier Christy Clark's.

And here's the really great part: Williams has only 89 constituents to worry about.

Well, probably only 88, since it's pretty much guaranteed that band councillor Joanne Charles isn't complaining. Her salary was \$187,138.

Cook might have to worry a bit about the other councillor, Roxanne Charles, because she must surely wonder why her salary was only \$4,725, although she did have expenses of \$27,473.

But for some band members, there's a lot to be concerned about. For more than a decade, residents of the 129-hectare reserve south of White Rock along the coast to the U.S. border have had a permanent boil water advisory.

For most of the last 50 years, the band leased land to Surrey. It was supposed to be for a park, but Surrey and White Rock used part of it for a landfill.

It's not that there isn't money available. The reserve is close enough to the border that the Semiahmoo operate a duty-free shop. And the band had an accumulated surplus of \$4.32 million last year.

Meantime, Gwawaenuk Chief Charlie Williams has it at least as good, if not better, than Cook. On remote Watson Island, there are only 39 band members and last year, Williams' tax-free salary was \$211,090.

The happy little worlds of these First Nations leaders are perhaps less so since The Sun's Gordon Hoekstra reported on their salary and expense disclosures, which they are required to file by the end of July each year.

As it did last year, Semiahmoo missed this year's deadline. So how much more — if anything — the chief and councillors earned in 2014 remains to be seen.

But if the band doesn't file by Sept. 1, the federal government has said it will freeze funding for all but essential services such as health and education.

This is only the second year that the public can see what First Nations councils earn, posted on the [Aboriginal Affairs website](#).

Except some bands are refusing to file. Last year, 11 bands failed to file some or part of the information required under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which has prompted the federal government to seek enforcement orders from the Federal Court.

Five First Nations from Alberta and Saskatchewan were in court earlier this week asking the court to stay the proceedings. They argue that salaries and expenses should not have to be disclosed if the money doesn't come from the government, but are using funds from the bands' companies.

First Nations leaders, led by the Assembly of First Nations, fought hard against the legislation, describing it as simplistic, heavy-handed, paternal.

They remain concerned the federal government will use the high salaries and expenses as a reason to punish bands financially even though the living conditions on too many reserves are evidence of the need for more resources.

First Nations leaders are also concerned for the one-bad-apple reason. They're rightly concerned that outliers like Cook and Williams will get all the media attention even though there are exceptions like Randy Porter, chief of the Bonaparte reserve near Kamloops, whose salary and expenses are zero. Yes, zero.

Yet, without transparency, these startlingly high salaries might have continued.

Now, it is there for all Canadians — and especially band members, who often live in third-world conditions — to see.

This would never have happened without the Conservative government's legislation, which is ironic considering the stories about high-salaried chiefs have shared space with the daily revelations from Sen. Mike Duffy's criminal trial. Duffy is charged with 31 counts including fraud, breach of trust and accepting a bribe.

Much of the trial has focused less on the former television reporter's allegedly false expense claims and more on how the prime minister's office tried to interfere in an audit as well as cover up the \$90,000 repayment of the claims that came from Stephen Harper's former chief of staff Nigel Wright.

So, as much as the chiefs and councillors have betrayed the trust of their members, it needs to be kept in the perspective it deserves.

Greed and abuse of power are in every culture, every party and at every political level.

What keeps it in check is transparency. It's needed for First Nations governments just as it is badly needed in Ottawa, our provincial capitals and local governments.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Daphne+Bramham+First+Nations+chiefs+rich+lives+disrupted+disclosure/11305380/story.html>

Transparency Act deadline missed by 19 of 22 N.W.T. First Nations

2014-2015 holdouts could be cut off from non-essential funding Sept. 1

By Tiar Wilson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 22, 2015 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 22, 2015 10:26 AM CT



A screen shot of the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development website shows as of August 20 there are 247 First Nations across the country that have yet to submit financial statements. (CBC)

Nineteen of 22 First Nations in the Northwest Territories are among 247 across the country that have yet to file their 2014-2015 financial statements on the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website, despite the July 28 deadline.

The 247 figure is as of this past Thursday, with those missing the deadline at risk of having some of their funding withheld.

The federal department says communities that missed the deadline have been notified.

"If these documents are not published by Aug. 28, the department will be withholding their funding for non-essential programs ... beginning Sept. 1, 2015," it said.

The First Nations Financial Transparency Act does not apply to self-governed First Nations, such as the Tlicho, which governs a region of four communities near Yellowknife.

The audits include the salaries of chiefs and councillors.

The First Nations Financial Transparency Act came into effect last year. It's been in place longer than Gladys Norwegian, chief of the Jean Marie River First Nation, has been in politics.

"It is what it is and I don't have a problem with it," Norwegian said.

The Jean Marie River First Nation has 140 members and only about 40 live in the community, which borders the Mackenzie River.

"We are such a small band, we really don't have large band revenue that we can speak of, as business, so until we get there, I am OK with the Transparency Act."

But she can't understand why she received a letter in the mail from Aboriginal Affairs on Wednesday about the First Nation's outstanding financial statements.

"Our auditor had sent in the audit report, the same way as he did last year, before the cut-off date," she said.



K'atlodeeche First Nation chief Roy Fabian says his band's audit isn't complete yet but they will post it to the Aboriginal Affairs website when it's ready. (CBC)

Another community on the tardy list is the K'atlodeeche First Nation near Hay River, N.W.T.

Chief Roy Fabian says the band's audit isn't yet complete.

In an email, Fabian wrote, "the stipulations for doing the audit each year is getting more and more difficult for First Nations' auditors to complete the reports by the July 29 deadline. Once we get the audit we will post it."

Court action

[The federal government was in court in Saskatoon this week](#) to try to force eight First Nations that didn't file financial statements for 2013-2014 to open their books. It has also filed court applications against other bands, [including Yukon's Liard First Nation](#), that didn't file statements last year.

The Onion Lake band in Saskatchewan [is challenging the validity and constitutionality of the law](#), saying it has no issue providing what Ottawa wants under the act. However, it objects to making the information public on the government's website. Its lawyer argues posting those records online would cause havoc to the businesses owned by the band as it would put competitors at an advantage.

Bill Erasmus, Northwest Territories' regional chief at the Assembly of First Nations, was in Saskatoon for this week's court hearings.



Bill Erasmus, AFN's Regional Chief for the Northwest Territories says withholding funding to First Nations that don't comply with act puts 'a great burden on their capacity to function as a governing body.' (CBC)

He said he wants the federal government to stop enforcing the act until the federal court makes a decision and releases what he calls "Indian monies" from the Treasury Board of Canada.

"We are now into the second quarter and if they are not getting money there's a great burden on their capacity to function as a governing body," Erasmus said.

Northern leader wants apology

Erasmus blames the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) for misleading the public when it lobbied for the legislation.

"There ought to be an apology from the taxpayers association because they've caused a great deal of hardship in our communities," he said.



Todd MacKay, prairie director for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, says he won't apologize for the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, legislation for which the group lobbied, saying First Nations' members should have the same rights to access financial information as citizens of municipalities. (CBC)

Todd MacKay, prairie director of the CTF, said the organization still supports the legislation.

"I am not going to apologize for this," MacKay said.

"It makes no sense to say that First Nations people have to go to the band office and humbly ask to see the documentation when every other Canadian can get this information by simply Googling it, whether from city hall or from whichever government they are interested in."

While MacKay and Erasmus are on opposite sides, they agree on one thing: This should be a federal election issue.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/transparency-act-deadline-missed-by-19-of-22-n-w-t-first-nations-1.3199499>

Editorial: First Nations' transparency

[Calgary Herald Editorial Board](#)

Published on: August 22, 2015 | Last Updated: August 22, 2015 3:00 AM MDT



Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, takes issue with the fact the transparency law requires reserves to share financial details of businesses that don't rely on government funding.

Christina Ryan / Calgary Herald

Aboriginal leaders have the right to defend their position in court, but it's too bad many First Nations politicians can't accept the common-sense wisdom of the federal government's transparency act.

Many bands — including Alberta's Sawridge and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations — continue to oppose the law, which requires them to post their salaries and audited financial statements online. If it's said that sunshine is the best disinfectant, then the regular posting of such information on the Internet is the equivalent to an invigorating summer's day.

Given that the federal government transfers billions of dollars annually to First Nations band councils, it seems wrong-headed to argue that the details of where the money is spent should be shielded from taxpayers.

The salaries paid to some chiefs have raised eyebrows in the past — both among the aboriginals they ostensibly serve and the general taxpayers who direct money to them under constitutional obligations and the understanding that maintenance of their health and safety is simply the right thing to do and in all Canadians' interest.

It was recently learned, thanks to the government's legislation, for instance, that the Semiahmoo First Nation paid its chief and one of its councillors almost \$460,000 in the 2013-14 fiscal year. The chief was paid \$267,309 for his role in overseeing the affairs

of just 90 band members near Surrey, B.C. — which when his tax-free status is factored in, is more than Canada's prime minister is paid.

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, takes issue with the fact the law requires reserves to share financial details of businesses that don't rely on government funding, which he says creates confidentiality and competitiveness issues.

Quite frankly, if bands are receiving hefty regular payments from taxpayers, it doesn't seem unreasonable for them to know what other sources of income are in play. And it seems important for band members to understand the nuances of any financial agreements that are reached between their leadership and outside commercial interests, especially given the deplorable conditions that endure on some reserves. In only the rarest of circumstances can it be imagined that financial information would jeopardize confidentiality and competitiveness, and if aboriginal leaders are using business profits to ramp up their salaries, band members should know.

Aboriginal bands have every right to fight the Conservatives' transparency law before the courts, if that's their wish, and the wish of their members, but common sense would suggest such disclosure requirements do nothing but ensure native politicians' transparency and accountability. It seems a strange legal war to engage in.

Direct Link: <http://calgaryherald.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-first-nations-transparency>

Young aboriginal entrepreneur award deadline extended

By Leader-Post, The Leader-Post August 27, 2015 8:53 AM



Kendal Netmaker of Saskatoon, owner of Neechie Gear stores, was named the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business National Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2014. The deadline for application for the awards has been extended to Sept. 21. (David Stobbe for Postmedia)

The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) is extending the nomination deadline for the 2015 National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur Award to Sept. 21.

CCAB is calling for nominations from up-and-coming aboriginal entrepreneurs under the age of 35. The top-rated applicant will receive a \$10,000 financial award and be recognized at CCAB's 2016 Toronto Gala.

To be eligible for the National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur Award, you must:

Be a Canadian resident of First Nation (status or non-status), Métis or Inuit ancestry and between the ages of 19 and 35.

Be self-employed for a minimum of one year.

Submit a 30 to 60-second video about you and your business.

Fill out the online application form, once your video is completed. (You may not save your application form and so it must be filled out in one sitting).

The recipient will be chosen by a selection committee in the fall. All applicants will be notified by mid-November.

For more information, contact Andre Morriseau, director, awards and communications, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, at 416-961-8663, extension 240, or send an email to: amorrisseau@ccab.com.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/Young+aboriginal+entrepreneur+award+deadline+extended/11319334/story.html>

Council approves motion to pressure province into lowering rural taxes

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Wednesday, August 26, 2015 5:07:19 MDT PM



Anzac Grocery as it appeared on Saturday August 22, 2015. The business was one of several rural ones to complain about rural non-residential during Tuesday's council meeting. Garrett Barry/Fort McMurray Today/Postmedia Network

Wood Buffalo's council will agree to pressure the province into lowering taxes in the municipality's rural hamlets, after several rural business owners and aboriginal leaders complained to council that the tax rate was hurting development and overall quality of life.

After returning from summer recess, Councillor Jane Stroud submitted a motion that would give the municipality power to tax non-residential properties in the hamlets the same mill rate as businesses in Fort McMurray, provided the province approves.

The motion also calls for creating a "Hamlet Service Area" in the municipality, which would tax all classes of properties the same mill rate as Fort McMurray.

Stroud, who represents the ward covering Anzac, Janvier and Conklin, says rural business owners pay a rate 4.67 times higher than their Fort McMurray counterparts.

Once the motion was presented, Metis and business leaders from Conklin, Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan appeared before council, pleading that the councillors accept the motion.

Jeffrey O'Donnell, CEO of the Conklin Resource Development Advisory Committee, pointed out that many rural business that struggle and close not only provide community services, but support oil companies, too.

"Unless you operate out of the rural communities like Conklin or McKay or Chip, you can only then really understand the impact," he said.

O'Donnell was joined by Ron Quintal, president of the Fort McKay Metis, and Fred "Jumbo" Fraser, president of the Fort Chipewyan Metis. Other rural business owners, including owners of Anzac Grocery and Zee Bar & Grill, also complained about the tax policies.

Council was sympathetic, but as Coun. Allan Vinni pointed out, the ultimate decision to amend the taxes lies with the provincial government.

"You're preaching to the choir here," he said. "The way that tax structure works is preventing the smaller communities in this municipality from achieving their destiny in every way."

Vinni conceded council has not done a "stellar job" at pressuring the provincial cabinet in the past, but pledged to make it a priority.

"The more they hear from you guys, the more they hear from all of us, then the more chances there are they're going to amend this," he said.

Council passed the motion unanimously, after councillors Colleen Tatum and Tyran Ault proposed amendments regarding financial relief for rural businesses and distribution of rural taxes.

After the meeting, Mayor Melissa Blake told reporters the motion should not impact the oil and gas industry, and was optimistic the newly elected Alberta NDP would be willing to help the municipality.

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/08/26/council-approves-motion-to-pressure-province-into-lowering-rural-taxes>

Aaron Wudrick: Don't repeal the First Nations Fiscal Transparency Act

[Aaron Wudrick, National Post](#) | August 25, 2015 5:33 PM ET
[More from National Post](#)



Councillor Joanne Charles and Chief Willard Cook of the Semiahmoo were paid a combined \$460,000 in 2013-2014.

Imagine Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau promising to keep his salary a secret after being elected prime minister. It's an unfair violation of privacy, he might say. It only serves to inflame negative stereotypes about overpaid politicians. And why should people in other countries be able to look up his prime ministerial salary on the Internet?

Canadians would never accept that lack of transparency, yet that's exactly what Trudeau wants to impose on First Nations communities. He has promised to repeal the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA). Meanwhile, NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair voted against the legislation, but has failed to make it clear what he will do if elected.

The FNFTA is simple: it ensures Canadians living on reserves have access to the salaries paid to their elected chiefs and councils, as well as audited band financial statements. It's

the type of information that's been a Google-search away for all other Canadians for years.

One need not be a master political strategist to deduce Trudeau's gambit: some First Nations politicians do not like this law and Trudeau hopes to earn their support by pledging to get rid of it. But if he is truly interested in looking out for the interests of First Nations people — and not simply pandering to a handful of obstructionist chiefs — he should consider how this law came into being in the first place.

The FNFTA's lineage can be traced to complaints brought forward by First Nations people themselves. Phyllis Sutherland from Peguis First Nation in Manitoba publicized information about dubious spending in her own community. As champions of transparency and accountability for politicians at all levels, we at the Canadian Taxpayers Federation were happy to assist in the effort, helping to ensure that First Nations people would finally have the same ability as all other Canadians to know something as simple as the salaries of their elected officials.

It's the type of information that's been a Google-search away for all other Canadians for years.

First Nations leaders who make clumsy the arguments that the FNFTA is “racist” or “unnecessary,” do so in the face of a number of very inconvenient facts. For example, the notion that First Nations politicians are being “singled out” for a form of draconian transparency is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the salaries of virtually all politicians at federal, provincial and municipal levels across Canada are already made public online for all the world to see. And revelations from First Nations that have come to light since the FNFTA became law, such as in the case of Chief Ron Giesbrecht of the Kwikwetlam First Nation in B.C. last year and the Semiahmoo First Nation more recently, greatly undermine any assertions that that First Nations people “already have access to this information.”

This information gap was best illustrated by Kwikwetlam band council member Joe Marvin when he said: “I want the public to know that the membership knew nothing about this. And if it wasn't for this new transparency act, I don't think we ever would have known.”

Let that sink in: a member of the elected band council had no clue his chief had pocketed \$800,000 of band money as part of a land deal until the FNFTA forced its exposure.

Indeed, with a 98 per cent reporting compliance rate for 2013-14, it's obvious that the FNFTA has been a resounding success. If anything, it should be expanded to include regional, provincial and national First Nations bodies.

Psst... do you like politics? Sign up for the Post's wry new morning newsletter, Full Briefing. Click [here](#).

Far from inflaming negative stereotypes about First Nations, the FNFTA can actually help to fight them, by giving the large number of excellent chiefs and councillors clear facts to which they can point. Perhaps most importantly, it empowers First Nations people to make more informed decisions about their political leadership. It also allows them to engage on a more equal footing with all Canadians, which will help foster a more informed and fact-based public policy dialogue on all sides.

Repealing the FNFTA would be a slap in the face to brave souls like Phyllis Sutherland and every other person from a First Nation who has spoken up and demanded accountability in own their communities. Trudeau should reconsider his ill-advised pledge. Mulcair should break his silence. Anyone wanting to be prime minister must commit to keeping the FNFTA in place.

Aaron Wudrick is the federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/aaron-wudrick-dont-repeal-the-first-nations-fiscal-transparency-act>

Opinion: Salary disclosures aren't helping

First Nations: Transparency measures are well intended, but are having a negative impact

By Lisa Ethans, Special To The Sun August 25, 2015

Much ado is being made about the compensation and salaries of chiefs within B.C.'s First Nations. These disclosures have been made to the federal government because of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which took effect last year, and requires the 600 or so bands across the country to publicly file audited financial statements, as well as the remuneration and expenses for chiefs and council members. Previously, First Nations were required to file this information with the federal government, and most of them posted it internally, but it was not made public.

As someone who has provided financial advisory and management consulting services to First Nations for more than two decades, the wide variance in chief and council remuneration is not surprising. While these transparency measures may be well intended, they are having negative impacts.

There are many complexities to the remuneration of elected officials in any system, but it is even more complex with First Nations. There is no widely accepted job description for a chief or councillor and the responsibilities can differ significantly, depending on the community and on what other roles or positions within the band a chief or council member is taking on. Some chiefs or councillors, for example, also act as CEO, CFO, band manager or hold other positions within the band administration.

So what is the comparator we should look to, a minister? Mayor? CEO? Should the band's population impact the remuneration level? Revenues? Arguably, the job is even more challenging for smaller First Nations who do not have the resources to hire sufficient administrative staff.

In my experience, having had the privilege to work with dozens of First Nations all across Canada, First Nation communities solving these questions for themselves is clearly the best approach. And, in my opinion, disclosure to the public of a chief or council member's remuneration without further context or information on the circumstances or of what the job entails does not provide enough information for anyone to fairly judge whether the level of remuneration is appropriate.

While surely there are occasions where a chief is overpaid, what recourse is there under this new legislation? And what of the potential underpayment of band officials? Based on the recently released statistics, the range of annual remuneration for elected councils has ranged from zero (although that chief received \$1,498 in expense reimbursements) to the high numbers we have seen disclosed this past week in the media. These disclosures have appeared to lead to more questions than answers.

From a recent quote in the Globe and Mail, Chief Councillor Ellis Ross of the Haisla Nation has suggested it is leading to racism, while others have expressed concern that it is only furthering to sour public opinion on First Nations.

Setting that aside, on balance, we must question whether this disclosure is beneficial within First Nation communities or if it only serves to create internal conflict. Some reports suggest chiefs and councils are denying services to members in order to pay their wages. This would not be possible without consequences, as it is not allowed under most funding arrangements; federally funded programs and services are not controlled by councils, but by the federal government primarily through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Health Canada.

However, mainstream media accounts would lead the public and First Nations' members to believe otherwise - which is adding fuel to the fire. It is also fuelling a popular discourse that First Nations, in general, are not capable of managing their affairs. This is simply not true when you consider most First Nations regularly receive unqualified or clean audit opinions on their annual audits. Outside of federal transfers, some First Nations do have discretionary funding available. There are many views on how this money should be spent, and just like any other government, First Nation leaders face criticism on how funds are spent from those who elected them. Unfortunately, the disclosure of remuneration, as it is, does not serve to address this. There are initiatives underway, however, that will.

Many First Nations are interested in governance reform, and are trying to either improve the practices under the Indian Act, or to negotiate new arrangements or legislation to replace it. I am encouraged by the everincreasing number of First Nations that are working hard to create better financial and governance practices and are focused on

improving the health and well-being of their communities. Most are doing this on their own accord; not because they are being forced into it.

These initiatives will allow for far greater accountability than merely disclosing one part of the overall picture, and should be applauded and supported.

Lisa Ethans is partner, founder and national aboriginal client services leader for Deloitte Canada.

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Opinion+Salary+disclosures+aren+helping/11315285/story.html#ixzz3k7tFLd4S>

Aboriginal Community Development

Inuit elders share feast and fashion at annual gathering

‘It’s quite interesting how far our relatives can go,’ says event coordinator

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 22, 2015 7:01 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 22, 2015 7:01 AM CT



Elders who took part in the 21st annual Elders' Gathering in Iqaluit refused to slow down as they participated in a jam-packed, lively schedule that included soccer matches, a community feast and even a fashion show.

"The main enjoyment of this gathering is relatives that haven't seen each other for a long time meeting up and finding out who you're related to and by what family tree," said Napatchie McRae, the event's co-ordinator.

"It's quite interesting how far our relatives can go."

One of the highlights of the event is seeing elders from Nunavut and Nunavik share their skills.

"They're sharing their wisdom with different areas of the North," said McRae. "Certain areas have different ways of doing this and that."



'The main enjoyment of this gathering is relatives that haven't seen each other for a long time meeting up and finding out who you're related to and by what family tree,' said organizer Napatchie McRae. (Travis Burke)

She said the four-day gathering, which ended on Thursday, included storytelling, Inuktitut baseball, Inuktitut soccer, games and comedy acts.

The sharing of culture and community over food is always a big draw at the annual gathering.

"What seems like it's not enough becomes large when everyone enjoys it and we try to make sure that everybody gets something to eat," said McRae.

She said although the annual gathering is growing, there are certain factors — like the cost of transportation — which need to be overcome.

"With inflation we have to do more fundraising, and so we rely on our own fundraising plus donations."

It's up to individuals or groups to cover their own costs of attending the event. Next year the gathering will move to a community in Nunavik.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-elders-share-feast-and-fashion-at-annual-gathering-1.3199863>

Aboriginal art project to reflect Edmonton river valley park steeped in sacred knowledge

By Madeleine Cummings, Edmonton Journal August 24, 2015



Christine Frederick and elder Jerry Saddleback during a workshop and blessing at Queen Elizabeth Park in 2013.

The Edmonton Arts Council is calling on aboriginal artists to propose public art projects for a revitalized Queen Elizabeth Park that will honour the land's history.

Long before the land south of the North Saskatchewan River and near 105th Street became a park in 1909, it served as a gathering place for the Cree, Blackfoot, and other First Nations.

The intention behind a new Aboriginal Art Park, to open in 2017, is to celebrate the region's largely forgotten history and bring aboriginal artists across the country in conversation with each other and the public.

The council will be accepting portfolios and letters of intent from aboriginal artists until Sept. 28. Emerging and established artists are invited to apply.

Shortlisted artists (chosen by a committee that includes community members, elders and public art experts) will visit the park this fall and up to six proposals will eventually be selected.

The public art project is part of the city's multi-year effort to revitalize a park that has lost relevance, accessibility and functionality for Edmontonians in recent years.

"We're asking artists to respond to the place," said Candice Hopkins, the art project's curator. "Artists have an amazing ability to translate stories, no matter where those artists come from."

Though the idea is to reflect the history of a specific place in Edmonton, organizers hope the project will allow artists from across Canada to learn from each other and local knowledge-keepers.

According to Jo-Ann Saddleback, an artist with Cree and Métis heritage who has sat on the park's steering committee with her husband, Jerry, since 2012, virtually all of the land that hugs the river valley is steeped in sacred knowledge.

"Men from Maskwacis, carrying moccasins, used to run more than 100 kilometres to this part of the river," she said.

Countless stories thought to have taken place on the proposed Aboriginal Arts Park site have emerged in committee meetings over the past few years.

"There were people who were crying, they were so moved," said Christine Frederick, who also sits on the committee. "It's like this puzzle piece that comes into place ... of a picture that has been denied to us."

In its early days, Queen Elizabeth Park boasted boardwalks, a bandstand, a brewery, a giant checkers board and even a pen for moose and deer. In the 1920s, its new outdoor swimming pool was touted as the first of its kind in Western Canada.

"I did not know that the pool itself has history," Frederick said. "I love that. "But there's history that's much deeper and even more profound that we can bring to the surface."

Some stories of the land are too sacred to share, except in certain circumstances, such as a special ceremony. Saddleback suspects some of the land's history will always remain mysterious.

But a handful of elders, her husband included, have incredible stories that they are willing to tell, if asked.

Artists will be invited to do just that.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Aboriginal+project+reflect+Edmonton+river+valley+park+steeped+sacred+knowledge/11314168/story.html>

CRTC Calls for Applications for Radio Licence(s) to Serve Urban Aboriginal Communities

Aug 26, 2015 1:26 PM 2015-08-26

The CRTC has announced that it is calling for applications for a radio licence or licences to serve the urban Aboriginal communities in one or more of the Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver markets.

The Commission is seeking innovative applications that focus on serving Aboriginal Canadians, regardless of the type of service proposed. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how their proposals fulfill this mandate. Persons interested in responding to this call must submit a duly completed application to the Commission by 12 January 2016

Applicants will be required to provide evidence giving clear indication that there is a demand and a market for the proposed service. This includes demonstrating the needs of the Aboriginal communities in the market(s) in question, how the proposed service(s) will meet them and whether, if there are currently services addressing Aboriginal communities, the market(s) can sustain the proposed additional service(s).

The Commission revoked the broadcasting licences for the following Type B Native radio stations held by Aboriginal Voices Radio Inc. (AVR), effective 25 July 2015:

- CKAV-FM Toronto (operating at 106.5 MHz);
- CKAV-FM-2 Vancouver (operating at 106.3 MHz);
- CKAV-FM-3 Calgary (operating at 88.1 MHz);
- CKAV-FM-4 Edmonton (operating at 89.3 MHz); and
- CKAV-FM-9 Ottawa (operating at 95.7 MHz).

By Order of the Federal Court of Appeal dated 21 August 2015, AVR has been granted leave to appeal the decision revoking AVR's licences in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa. The Court also stayed this decision and ordered that AVR's broadcasting licences for these five radio stations remain in effect subject to the same terms and conditions until final determination of the appeal.

The Commission noted that radio services designed to serve the underserved urban Aboriginal communities in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa could complement existing Aboriginal services in a way that would contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the Broadcasting Act and that there is a pressing need to serve the Aboriginal community as a whole given that issues vitally important to Aboriginal Canadians are not fully covered or addressed at all in non-Native media. As a priority, the Commission stated its intention to issue a call for applications and hold a hearing to license new services that would fulfill this mandate.

It is important to note that the original decisions to license AVR followed a series of competitive processes in 2000 and 2001 and were taken on the basis that its service

would serve the public interest and contribute to fulfilling the policy objectives to reflect the special place of Aboriginal peoples within Canadian society. At the time, the Commission was of the view that Canada's urban Aboriginal communities were not adequately served by radio services.

.Under these unique circumstances, the Commission considers it appropriate to issue a call for applications for services that could fill any gap as it relates to serving Aboriginal Canadians in the above-noted markets, while noting that the Edmonton market is currently served by an Aboriginal radio service, CFWE-FM-4. As indicated earlier, the Commission encourages applicants to consider innovative approaches and is not limiting the type of service that can be proposed. Issuing the call at this time will provide potential applicants with early guidance in developing these innovative proposals and will ensure that if the appeal is denied, the issue of service to the urban Aboriginal communities in these markets can be considered without delay.

Each applicant wishing to be considered as part of this process is required to indicate how the proposed service will meet the needs of Aboriginal Canadians in the market(s), as well as provide all the information requested in the appendices to this document for the type of service that it proposes to operate. An applicant must clearly demonstrate that its application includes the required information and submit the appropriate completed application form. Requests for information by Commission staff will seek to clarify specific facts or resolve minor discrepancies in the applicants' proposals.

In evaluating the applications received, the Commission will consider how the proposed service will meet the needs of Aboriginal Canadians in the market(s) which it is seeking to serve. To assist the Commission in this evaluation, applicants should consider addressing the following in their applications:

- plans and commitments regarding Aboriginal programming, including how the applicant's commitments will reflect the interests and needs of the Aboriginal population to be served, foster the development of Aboriginal cultures and help preserve Aboriginal languages;
- the capacity of the proposed business plan, whether commercial or non-commercial, to sustain the programming plans set out in the application; and
- plans to provide for broad participation by the Aboriginal population of the region served in the governance, operation and programming of the station.

In its analysis, the Commission will evaluate the applicant's programming proposal and commitments in a number of areas. These will include the manner in which the applicant will reflect the local community, including the community's diversity and distinct nature. Accordingly, the Commission will consider commitments related to local programming and the benefits that such programming will bring to the community.

The Commission will also consider commitments regarding the percentage of Canadian content of musical selections, emerging artists and, where applicable, the percentage of French-language vocal music, as well as contributions to Canadian content development (CCD) for commercial radio proposals.

The Commission does not regulate the format of AM or FM stations that base their programming on popular music. The Commission will however assess the applicant's business plan in light of the proposed format or programming offering since the two are interrelated. The business plan should clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to fulfill its proposed programming plans and commitments. Further, the Commission will examine the programming proposals submitted by the applicants to determine which overall proposal best suits the market.

This factor relates to concerns regarding concentration of ownership and cross-media ownership. The Commission seeks to strike a balance between its concerns for preserving a diversity of news voices in a market and the benefits of permitting increased consolidation of ownership within the industry.

The Commission will therefore assess how approval of the application would add to or serve to maintain the diversity of voices available in the market, as well as increase the diversity of programming available to listeners.

The possibility that licensing too many stations in a market could lead to a reduction in the quality of service to the local community remains of concern to the Commission. The economic condition of the market and the likely financial impact of the proposed station on existing stations in the market will therefore be relevant.

Accordingly, the Commission will evaluate how the proposed station's programming, general and core target audience and projected audience share overlap that of stations already present in the market. While the Commission may also consider the profitability of existing stations in the market in its assessment of the impact of the proposed station on existing ones, the profitability of existing stations will only be one factor in its evaluation.

In markets with fewer than eight commercial stations operating in a given language, the Commission's common ownership policy permits a person to own no more than three stations, with a maximum of two in any one frequency band. In markets with eight or more commercial stations, a person may own no more than two FM and two AM stations in any given language. The concentration of ownership resulting from this policy may increase the possibility of competitive imbalance in a radio market.

The Commission will therefore consider factors such as the number of radio stations that an applicant already owns in the market, the profitability of its station(s) and the concentration of ownership in that market in making its licensing decision.

The Commission intends to consider the applications at a public hearing. However, the Commission advises applicants that it will withdraw any application from the public hearing if it is not advised by the Department at least twenty days prior to the first day of the hearing that the application is technically acceptable. The Commission must also be advised by the Department at least twenty days prior to the first day of the hearing that any alternative frequencies proposed by the applicant are technically acceptable. Otherwise those frequencies shall not be considered as part of the proceeding.

Direct Link: <http://www.broadcastermagazine.com/news/crtc-calls-for-applications-for-radio-licence-s-to-serve-urban-aboriginal-communities/1003776074/?&er=NA>

New Cabot Square park aims to empower Aboriginal Montrealers

CBC

Posted: 06/18/2015 6:00 am EDT Updated: 06/18/2015 6:59 am EDT

Cabot Square will officially reopen July 8th with a focus on empowering Aboriginal Montrealers, who for more than 30 years have gathered at the park located on the corner of Ste-Catherine Street West and Atwater Avenue.

"We've put an emphasis on hiring as many people from the marginalized Aboriginal population — people experiencing homelessness or people who struggle," said Rachel Deutsch, Cabot Square project manager with Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy NETWORK.

The small building in the park has been renovated and will house a cafe run by community group L'Intinéraire, which aims to help marginalized and homeless people find employment.

That building will also be home base for two outreach workers and a university student.

Tune in to CBC Radio One's Daybreak at 7:15 a.m. for more on this story from Shari Okeke, or listen live [here](#).

The outreach workers have been providing support in the area for the past year. That often includes accompanying people to access services elsewhere in the city, but once the park officially reopens they will focus more on Cabot Square.

A university student, who is Aboriginal, has been hired to stay in the park office, provide pamphlets with information about resources and call outreach workers or police officers when necessary.

Aboriginal artists have also been hired to give workshops in the park.

The goal is to recognize their skills and expose non-Aboriginal Montrealers to their talents.

"It's my first time being asked to carve at Cabot Square...it's exciting," said Simiuni Nauya, a soapstone carver who will do workshops this summer.

Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy NETWORK has been meeting with the Ville-Marie borough and Montreal police to plan how to make the new Cabot Square safe and welcoming for everyone.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/06/18/new-cabot-square-park-aim_n_7610706.html?m=true

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Inuit Youth Summit celebrates 10th year

100 youth delegates from Nunavut, N.W.T., Quebec and Labrador gather in Iqaluit

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 21, 2015 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 21, 2015 4:00 AM CT



One 100 young people from the four Inuit regions of Canada are coming together for five days in Iqaluit to take part in the 10th National Inuit Youth Summit. 'It's important for us to revitalize our Inuit language and culture. If I can have a hand in that, that would be my purpose,' says Maatalii Okalik, the new president of the National Inuit Youth Council. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

About 100 youth from the four Inuit regions of Canada are coming together for five days in Iqaluit to take part in the 10th National Inuit Youth Summit.

"I'm here for inspiration, for rejuvenating my spirits," says Louisa Yeates, a youth delegate from Kuujuaq, Que.

She says being a youth leader can be draining and isolating work at times and the summit is a great opportunity to meet face to face and learn from one another.

"You think we're so different, but actually we're really the same," she says.

"We all have a lot of the same issues, the same challenges, and it's so great to hear other perspectives on these subjects."

So far, a conversation about residential schools and attempted cultural genocide really hit home for Yeates.

"The word 'attempted,' in the past tense, totally makes sense to me because they didn't succeed. We did," she says.

"We still have our culture. We still have our identity. We still have our language, no matter what dialect it is. It's still strong."

Creating a space for the 100 delegates from Nunavut, N.W.T., Quebec and Labrador to have these kinds of revelations is the main goal of the conference.

"It's important for us to revitalize our Inuit language and culture," says Maatalii Okalik, the new president of the National Inuit Youth Council.

"If I can have a hand in that, that would be my purpose."

She says working toward this unity is her dream.

"I would love the Inuit youth to also feel that drive and ability to be able to do something and make a change for the future, and I know that National Inuit Youth Council is one way to make that happen."

Over the next few days youth will discuss suicide prevention, health, education, employment and political involvement. On Sunday, the group will head out on the land before everything wraps up on Monday.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-youth-summit-celebrates-10th-year-1.3198453>

GDI to get \$11M in funding

The Starphoenix August 22, 2015

Metis education in Saskatchewan is getting a boost from the provincial government.

The province announced Friday that more than \$11 million has been awarded to Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) as part of a five-year renewal agreement with the institute to support the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Dumont Technical Institute.

"Steady growth within Saskatchewan's Metis population has created an ongoing demand for basic education, skills and university training through the Institute," GDI Executive Director Geordy McCaffrey said in a news release.

Gabriel Dumont Institute, established in 1980, provides educational and cultural programs, resources, and services to Metis people. SUNTEP is a four-year education program designed for Metis and non-Status Indian students.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/entertainment/funding/11309562/story.html>

MP's new book tells story of girl who stood up to Ottawa on First Nations education



First Nations education activist Shannen Koostachin and MP Charlie Angus are photographed in 2008. (Charlie Angus)

Josh Dehaas, CTVNews.ca

Published Saturday, August 22, 2015 11:55AM EDT

Last Updated Saturday, August 22, 2015 12:35PM EDT

Many Canadians have heard of Attawapiskat First Nation. They've heard about the [floods](#), the [fires](#), the poor [housing](#) and the evacuations. They know about Chief Theresa Spence's [hunger strike](#), the [audits](#) and the financial [scandals](#).

Fewer know the story of Shannen Koostachin, the girl who went to Ottawa years before the headlines to ask for a proper school.

Shannen thought it was simply unacceptable that other kids had “comfy” places to learn, while she and her classmates had to shuffle between frigid portables set up next to the site of the old school, which closed in 2000 due to diesel fuel contamination.

“It’s hard to feel like you could have a chance to grow up to be somebody important when you don’t have proper resources like libraries and science labs,” Shannen said in one of her many [speeches](#).

“You know that kids in other communities have proper schools, so you begin to feel as if you are a child who doesn’t count for anything. That’s why some of our students begin to give up in Grade 4 and Grade 5. They just stop going to school. Imagine that.”

It was a message that resonated with school children across the country -- but initially not with the government.

The school was eventually built, 14 years after the old one closed, but Shannen didn’t live to see the new library or science lab. She died in a car accident in 2010.

NDP MP Charlie Angus knew Shannen. She stayed with him in New Liskeard, Ont., after she left Attawapiskat for a better high school.

In his new book, *Children of the Broken Treaty*, Angus traces the history of education in the Far North, right from the 1906 treaty to the opening of Attawapiskat’s new school.

Angus argues Shannen’s fight for equal education has started a conversation “about how a country as rich and inclusive as Canada can deliberately marginalize children.”

He spoke to CTVNews.ca over the phone about the new book.

Do you think Canadians realize education was among the promises the federal government made in order to get First Nations people to sign treaties giving up control of territory?

I think one of the things the Shannen Koostachin story has really shed a light on is the horrific inequities in education which most Canadians have no idea of.

But the inequities didn’t just happen. They are historically rooted. You go back to the signing of Treaty 9 that transferred some of the largest timber, hydro and mineral wealth in the world to Ontario and the federal government and the promise, in return, was they were going to deliver education to children. What the children got was brutality in residential schools and the ongoing systemic discrimination they’re still facing today.

Do you think that’s changed since Shannen? Are Canadians more educated now?

It’s been a real transformative role of the Attawapiskat school fight and the role played by Shannen Koostachin, which is why I tried to document it. She managed to cut through

the fog of misinformation, the sense that First Nations are some other world, some other place. There was just such immediacy to her and it resonated so much with Canadian children that this is now taught in classrooms.

The story of Shannen has been repeated in so many ways and it's really forcing the conversation and how a country as rich as Canada thinks it's okay to squander not just the potential and dreams of First Nations children, but in some cases their very lives. I think the Canadian people are much better than the miserly response that the government has had toward first nation children.

One thing that comes up a lot in the book is these parallels you make to racism against blacks in the U.S. Rosa Parks is mentioned. Does it take a Rosa Parks-type of character for something like this to change?

I think it makes sense the children in Attawapiskat looked at Rosa Parks as a symbol. It took one child to really stand up. With the civil rights movement, it was the symbolic act of Rosa Parks that suddenly put it into a very real frame. For this generation of indigenous children, it was Shannen confronting an Indian affairs minister when she was 13 years old.

Shannen says: "It's hard to feel you can have a chance to grow (into) somebody important when you don't have proper resources like libraries and science labs." Is Canada missing out when First Nations grow up believing they can't be somebody important?

Shannen was watching her childhood disappear and she knew if she didn't do whatever she could to break through that door, those opportunities wouldn't come again. Children have only one childhood and once it's gone, it's gone forever.

I don't think we'll ever be the country we're meant to be until we realize that the greatest wealth we have in the north is not the diamonds or the copper or the oil, it's the potential of these children. And we can't as a nation in any good conscience squander this potential anymore.

At the end of the day, a lot of this comes down to money. The Parliamentary Budget Officer says we're running a deficit. The Liberals have said they would potentially run a deficit a bit longer in order to increase spending on First Nation education. Would an NDP government be willing to run a deficit in order to bring the per-capita funding up to provincial standards?

Nobody ever suggests that it costs us a deficit if we educate non-Native children. Suddenly native children are an economic liability? They aren't. They're an investment. We are limiting the economic potential of our nation, as well as the moral potential of our nation, by denying children the ability to go to school.

The New Democrats say we have to deal with the real deficit: the children. That's the real deficit, this deficit of potential. And we can do this. It's just a matter of making it a priority.

Again, how would you pay for it? Is it something you'd pay for through higher corporate or income taxes?

The government continually underspends its education budget. They'll announce \$320 million in new funding for schools and they take a quarter of it back. Last year they took \$80 million back and spent it on tax cuts. You would never do that in the provincial school system.

Considering the size of the population of First Nations children, should there be a minister dedicated to this?

The federal government doesn't see themselves in the business of educating children and yet they are technically one of the largest education operations in the country. They do a brutally bad job of it. The message I would challenge to any Indian Affairs minister is: you effectively are the minister of education for one of the biggest populations in the country, you need to treat your portfolio with the same sense of responsibility that provincial ministers have.

In any provincial school system, heads would roll, yet in Indian Affairs it's just another day at the office.

Imagine what could be done if these teachers had access to pens and papers, and computers and science labs. I regularly get emails from people asking if I can help send supplies to their classes. In Canada in the 21st century, that shouldn't be an issue.

There are all these people out there who will say: "First Nations people, they don't pay tax on reserves for the most part, and they're already getting their fair share." What's your message to them?

I think the unfortunate thing in Canada is we have a blind spot when it comes to the situation facing many indigenous people.

We're a country that's enormously welcoming, enormously willing to help others and yet there's a sense among this small percentage or whatever that any time we pay money to help indigenous children, somehow that's a burden on the taxpayer. That's an absurd position but it's deeply rooted.

I think unfortunately under the Harper government, they will play on that card all the time.

In that sense, has the Harper government been racist toward aboriginal children?

We didn't get to this deplorable situation through one government. This situation, the crisis in education, has been decades in the making.

But I think what's shocking is how obstructionist the Harper government has been, how mean-spirited they are and how willing they are to try and turn ordinary Canadians against issues that are so basic to our humanity -- which is making sure our children do okay.

What's so shocking in the Attawapiskat school fight is that this is a government that brought brass knuckles to the table when children were just asking for a proper school.

That being said, so many Canadians came to the table to say what's happening to the children in Attawapiskat is appalling and we need to change it and I believe there's a lot of goodwill out there.

I believe that Canadians want this change and I think that's why the story of Shannen continues to resonate. I'm still obsessed with why this 15-year-old girl touched so many people (over) such a short lifespan.

You said the Harper government has been obstructionist, and you allege they've been mean-spirited. Was the Liberal government before them as bad on this file?

To be fair, it's not the Harper government (that) created this crisis. They inherited a crisis. Paul Martin's [two per cent cap](#) on First Nations funding has put a \$2-billion hole in First Nations funding. We had schools promised under Liberal ministers that were never built. This has been a long-standing federal culture of resistance to doing the right thing.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/mp-s-new-book-tells-story-of-girl-who-stood-up-to-ottawa-on-first-nations-education-1.2528292>

National Post View: A new dawn for Aboriginal education?

[National Post View](#) | August 22, 2015 | Last Updated: Aug 22 6:35 AM ET



Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau answers questions during a campaign stop in Sudbury, Ont., on Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2015.

On the campaign trail last week, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau pledged \$2.6 billion toward improving Aboriginal education. In an unsubtle attack on the Harper government's record on native issues, Trudeau said that his Liberal plan would be an end to "10 long-lost years."

As usual, opposition criticism contains both truth and exaggeration. While it is true that the quality of education on many Aboriginal reserves remains abysmal, it is untrue that the Conservatives have simply stood idly by. Indeed, the Tories introduced the First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act, designed to provide a stable funding stream, greater incorporation of Aboriginal language and culture in school curricula, support from education experts to improve programs and checks on ministerial power over Aboriginal education.

That arrangement failed for many reasons, though most notably because of the political divisions between the various parties to the Assembly of First Nations, culminating in the resignation of national chief Shawn Atleo. The legislation ultimately died with the dissolution of Parliament.

If Trudeau thinks he can overcome such challenges and create a new dawn for Aboriginal education, he is welcome to try. Thus far, his strategy is to simply throw more money at the problem, promising new (and increased) funding goals and pledging to lift the budget ceiling on federal spending for First Nations programs. He has not stated how a Liberal government would finance these new promises, or what accountability there would be for how taxpayers' money is spent, though his office says that those details will come later in the campaign.

Trudeau's insistence on negotiations on a "nation to nation" basis is similarly unexplained. Does it mean Canada (as one nation) negotiating with Aboriginal people in toto (as the other)? Or does it mean negotiating with each of the over 630 recognized First Nations? The latter course might seem more fruitful, in preference to the

increasingly dysfunctional Assembly of First Nations, whose ability to speak for the people it claims to represent is in any case dubious. The needs of all bands are not going to be identical moving forward; it may well be more pragmatic to establish smaller agreements on a case-by-case basis rather than pursuing a comprehensive national strategy. Still, 630 different sets of negotiations?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission into the harmful legacy of residential schools rightly placed great emphasis on improving aboriginal education. It is significant that all political parties are feeling pressure to deliver tangible efforts to improve the quality of life of Canada's Aboriginal peoples. At present, Trudeau's plan is little more than a funding promise. To translate more money into improved education outcomes for indigenous children will require structural reforms, of the kind the ill-fated Tory plan sought to address.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/national-post-view-a-new-dawn-for-aboriginal-education>

Former PM Paul Martin agrees aboriginal education funding is vital

By [Michael-Allan Marion](#), Brantford Expositor

Friday, August 21, 2015 9:42:34 EDT PM



OHSWEKEN - Former prime minister Paul Martin witnessed firsthand in a tour of Six Nations and New Credit on Friday the need for and the lingering gulf in financing aboriginal education. It's an issue he has championed since he left elected politics.

Martin, who leads the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative, went to Six Nations to support the campaign of Brantford-Brant Liberal candidate Danielle Takacs in the Oct. 19 federal election.

Whether he was touring Grand River Employment and Training, with its Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre, or Six Nations Polytechnic, or the dilapidated

hallways and rooms of the former Mohawk Institute, the message of aboriginal education, the potential of native students and the lingering effects from the Indian residential schools era were made clear to him by educators and political officials.

Several remarks were made about the need to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to overcome the effects of Canada's residential schools era.

Martin told the people he met he wanted to come back after the election to talk about more about their ideas.

In one skills trade training room in the Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre, Martin heard from manager Erin Monture and welding instructor Richard Green about the success the facility has found in preparing native students for apprenticeships and getting them into careers.

"We're actually getting people placed in a trade and making great money," Green told Martin and Takacs.

That program can take up to 20 students at a time, although administrators prefer the smaller class size of 15 so they can work more closely with them, Green said.

Monture said the administrators have learned that often the students come with barriers, such as lower education that needs upgrading and low self-esteem that is a legacy of the residential schools days.

They counteract that with cultural-specific education, she said.

Six Nations residents want to be in skilled trades, Martin was told, and an employment study has found they make up 15% of the territory's working population.

A major problem holding the facility back is a lack of funding that keeps them small, Monture said.

Martin noted that he has been at a training facility in Fort McMurray that is doing the same training and lacks resources.

"What we've got to do is get them together. If that can be done, it's amazing what you can do."

At the start of a roundtable at Six Nations Polytechnic, president Rebecca Jamieson told Martin he was in a learning institution dedicated to being a place "where we no longer have to park our culture at the door."

"Everyone has heard the truth. Now it's time for reconciliation," Six Nations elected Chief Ava Hill said, adding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's finding that furthering education is a fundamental part of the mending.

Six Nations Coun. Helen Miller told the gathering that arrangements had to be made in the past year to have a review done of the federal schools in the territory after officials had gone a long time without one.

"It was really disappointing because it didn't tell us anything more than what we already knew," she said.

She noted that the government has made attempts to have Six Nations take over the running of the schools, but council has resisted because they're already underfunded and there is no commitment to raise the funding level.

Looking straight at Martin and Takacs she said: "We need people to lobby for us."

Martin also heard that Polytech has a long-term goal of being a university and a centre for aboriginal studies and culture, but it needs more funding to fulfil those aspirations.

"As we go around the table, there a common element - a lack of funding," Martin said.

He recalled the days when his minority government from 2004 to 2006 negotiated over an 18-month period the Kelowna Accord which made a \$5-billion commitment for investment in education, housing, health services.

But the Conservative government "walked away from it," he said.

Nearly a decade later, "it's my view that it is going to take more money than Kelowna," Martin said.

Speaking as a one-time finance minister, he added "I don't believe there's a higher rate of return on investment that a dollar spent on a person's education."

"The First Nations have demonstrated a capacity to run their own education system, but I'm not sure Canadians understand that," Martin said.

He advised the gathering to go to Ottawa after the election with an attitude that they want an aboriginal education program that they - not federal officials - design.

"There are very few things in life that can't be taken from you once you have it, and one of them is an education," said Takacs.

Takacs is vying to win the Brantford-Brant seat in the federal election. Also in the race are Conservative candidate Phil McColeman, New Democrat Marc Laferriere, Green Party contender Kevin Brandt and Libertarian Rob Ferguson.

Direct Link: <http://www.parisstaronline.com/2015/08/21/former-pm-paul-martin-agrees-aboriginal-education-funding-is-vital>

Anonymous takes stand against 'flawed' child welfare and foster care systems



CTV Calgary Staff

Published Saturday, August 22, 2015 6:10PM MDT

Last Updated Saturday, August 22, 2015 6:27PM MDT

Protests organized by the activist group Anonymous are being held in locations around the world this weekend to bring an end to alleged flaws with systems created to protect children.

In Canada, rallies have been, or will be held, demanding child protective services be held legally accountable, hire only registered social workers, and an ombudsman should oversee all operations. Anonymous also wants an end to false accusations and believes that families who are wrongfully involved should be compensated.

Calgary's demonstration took place on Saturday along Macleod Trail, outside of city hall. While rally attendance was small, those who gathered shared personal stories of struggles within the system.



Sign at the International Day of Protest against Child Protection rally outside of Calgary City Hall

Dawn Kennedy has been involved in the foster care system for decades, first as a child, after her mother committed suicide when Dawn was eight years old, and now, as a mother separated from her son.

Her 12-year-old son is presently under foster care but she is unable to speak to particulars of his case as children in care are protected by publication bans.

Child protective services complaints are commonplace and Dawn says changes need to be made to the much maligned system.

“There’s no accountability, there’s no transparency,” said Dawn. “As long as people aren’t speaking up about it, it’s going to continue as it is.”

Dawn says government and case workers supplied her with food and shelter as she made her way through foster care but ended up in a situation without guidance or support.

“I was put in an apartment at almost 16-years-old and then just left there. I didn’t have any adult mentors or anything. Basically it felt like they just disposed of me.”

As an adult, Dawn placed her son under government care as she battled an issue with alcohol.

“I gave my child to them to look after him and, instead of looking after him, they gave him very, very little therapy,” said Dawn. “What was supposed to be a few months was dragged on for two years in court. My son was moved to seven homes and came back home extremely traumatized.”

Since 1999, approximately 800 Alberta children have died under provincial care, thirty of which occurred during the first three months of 2015. A large percentage of the deaths involved First Nations youth.

First Nations children account for more than 70 per cent of children in provincial care, an extremely disproportionate representation as only nine per cent of all children in Alberta are First Nations.

Michelle Robinson of the Aboriginal Peoples’ Commission says the representation should not come as a surprise.

“We have the institutionalization with residential schools, now we’re seeing it with the foster care system,” said Robinson. “All of these numbers are leading to the missing and murdered indigenous women, so that’s part of the reason we’re seeing these barriers, because nobody wants to be held accountable.”

In a statement to CTV, an Alberta Human Services’ spokesperson said the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate “appears not to be aware of the checks in the current Alberta child intervention system and the transparency in reporting publicly.”

Prior to the provincial election, Rachel Notley campaigned on promises to improve the system and reverse a planned \$49 million cut to the family and child protection budget. The Premier has yet to reverse the funding cut.

With files from CTV's Bridget Brown

Direct Link: <http://calgary.ctvnews.ca/anonymous-takes-stand-against-flawed-child-welfare-and-foster-care-systems-1.2529144>

Focus on First Nations education



Former prime minister Paul Martin, right, tours Grand River Employment and Training in Ohsweken with Brantford-Brant Liberal candidate Danielle Takacs, left, and GREAT's Erin Monture.

Brant News

By [Tamara Botting](#), Aug 24, 2015

It's not uncommon for Erin Monture, manager at Grand River Employment and Training in Ohsweken, to encounter people who have their Ontario Secondary School Diploma but can barely read at a Grade 6 level.

"GREAT spends a lot of time and money trying to get these students to where they should already be," Monture said. "They're not prepared to write the trades entrance exams.

"On paper they meet the requirements, but they can't pass the test."

It was just one of the issues Monture discussed with former prime minister Paul Martin when he and Brantford-Brant Liberal candidate Danielle Takacs toured Grand River Employment and Training last Friday.

The day also included tours of Six Nations Polytechnic, the Six Nations water treatment plant and Woodland Culture Centre, the site of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School, as well as a meeting with clan mothers and elders and a roundtable discussion at Woodland.

“Any policies to help First Nations people must be informed by their perspectives and adopted in collaboration with them,” Takacs said.

Takacs said she and Martin were at GREAT “to learn more about education in Six Nations and to learn where there is a gap.”

She noted that Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau has pledged a new deal for First Nations education that would include about \$2.6 billion in new funding.

“We’re looking at where that money could be implemented here,” Takacs said.

Martin congratulated GREAT staff for their “amazing work.”

“The fact is...you’re so far ahead of most regions in the country,” he said.

Martin said he plans to return to the facility and do whatever he can to support the work being done there.

“I will be focusing all the years I have left on education,” Martin said.

At the end of the visit, Monture presented Martin and Takacs with a basket woven from black ash and sweetgrass, with tobacco seed inside.

“I thought the meeting went well,” Monture said. “I had an opportunity to discuss our services, our success stories and our barriers, being a lack of funding.”

Direct Link: <http://www.brantnews.com/news-story/5811729-focus-on-first-nations-education/>

Conservatives, NDP decry Liberal First Nations education plan as unfocussed

By [Gabriela Panza-Beltrandi](#)

Monday, August 24, 2015 12:14:31 MDT PM

Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau announced a plan to implement better educations and economic opportunities for First Nations people on August 13.

The plan promises an initial, immediate investment of \$515 million per year in core funding for kindergarten right up to Grade 12 First Nations’ education, and is expected to rise to over \$750 million per year by the end of their first mandate if elected.

According to a release from the party, this includes an additional \$325 million annually on top of the funding “promised and never delivered by Stephen Harper”.

The new investment works out to a total of \$2.6 billion over the next four years.

“Basically that initial investment is intended to close the gap in First Nations education,” said Fort McMurray-Cold Lake Liberal candidate Kyle Harrietha.

“Education is the foundation for building more prosperous and sustainable communities and having an increasingly educated and skilled group of people is ultimately good for the entire Canadian economy, as First Nations are one of the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population.”

According to Harrietha, despite the growing population, First Nations students receive 30 percent less funding per student compared to students in provincial schools in Alberta.

“I think most people would agree that a 30 percent funding gap is absolutely appalling. It not only doesn’t help the First Nations students and families individually, but it certainly doesn’t help the broader community,” said Harrietha. “You could imagine what it would be like if a student in Cold Lake were getting 30 percent less per student than students in Bonnyville, and what sort of results that would lead to in terms of educational outcomes.”

In addition to closing the funding gap between First Nations students and other schools, the plan is also looking at funding to promote and preserve aboriginal language and cultural education in First Nations schools.

They also intend to increase support for First Nations post-secondary student programs through grant funding.

“Often times, the cost is just impossible to bare to travel far away for post secondary education,” said Harrietha. “(It offers) support for those who want to go to university or college for skilled trades.”

On top of that, Harrietha said that the Liberal Party is looking into making additional infrastructure investments through the plan.

“It’s something that needs to be addressed, and we need to close the gap as we have a conversation about the overall educational infrastructure,” Harrietha said.

“It’s about beginning a conversation on how these things can improve, but insuring that this gap that exists is closed both with per student funding and in terms of the infrastructure required to ensure that schools are up to the standards that provincial schools are at.”

“Education is not the only issue, though,” said Melody Lepine. Lepine is the Fort McMurray-Cold Lake NDP candidate, and the government and industry relations manager for the Mikisew Cree First Nations.

Lepine said that while education is important, there are other issues besides First Nations education that should be addressed, including poor drinking water conditions on First Nations’ reserves and infrastructure services such as health care.

“It’s great that they’re going to throw money at education (but) where is the action plan? Announcing money, you need to have action behind it and deliverables,” she said.

“We’ve had a Liberal government before in Canada, many times, and First Nation’s weren’t always satisfied with how they were managing our affairs.

“Is all of that money actually going to go to education or is it going to go to Indian affairs and bureaucracy in Ottawa?”

Harrietha assured that all the money would in fact be going towards First Nations causes.

“The idea is the work in partnership with First Nations, not dictate to First Nations. They have jurisdiction over their educational system, and we need to respect that as we move forward in terms of ensuring that the financial resources are there to allow for a better school system.”

Currently, First Nations students have two options for schooling: attend a First Nations school, or go to provincial schools. Unfortunately for students at provincial schools, that funding is not guaranteed.

According to Harrietha, that funding is dependent on attendance and other factors, which makes it difficult for school boards to plan out their budget, leaving First Nation’s students being less funded than other provincial students by the federal government.

“(This) makes it harder for provincial school boards,” explained Harrietha. “The government of Canada has not been meeting its minimum responsibilities to ensure that First Nations Students are adequately funded.”

In a press release, the Liberal Party claimed that the Conservative government has allowed over \$1 billion in government funding intended for Indigenous Peoples to lapse since 2009.

The Conservatives, however, disagree.

“Our Conservative government has increased investment in Aboriginal education by 25% (in recent years),” said Fort McMurray-Cold Lake Conservative candidate David Yurdiga. Despite the Liberal Party’s claims that the Harper government has slashed

federal resources for First Nations, Yurdiga insisted that the Conservative government has produces tangible results to benefit First Nations students.

“(The Conservative government has) built over 40 new schools. Our government has funded over 500 school projects. We have enhanced skills training to ensure our Aboriginals are able to take full advantage of Canada’s economic prosperity.

“What (the Liberal Party) is proposing is to throw billions of dollars in new money, without any clearly defined outcomes for First Nations students.”

According to Harrietha, though, the Liberal Party has committed to following the 94 recommendations the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made in June, a process that is part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy to acknowledge the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people in Canada.

“I will be working with whatever other members of parliament will work with me to ensure that the governments meets its obligations in terms of the recommendations made ... and working with First Nations to allow them to be able to move forward on some of these issues with the support of the Government of Canada.”

Direct Link: <http://www.coldlakesun.com/2015/08/24/conservatives-ndp-decry-liberal-first-nations-education-plan-as-unfocussed>

University of Alberta launches pilot program offering hands-on education to aboriginal youth

By [Caley Ramsay](#) Web Producer Global News, August 26, 2015 12:20 am



EDMONTON — A one-of-a-kind schooling model is now being offered at the University of Alberta with hopes of providing troubled aboriginal youth with hands-on education.

“It motivates me,” said 17-year-old Kirsten Threefingers. “It gives you a lot of things to do.”

Threefingers is one of 20 students enrolled in the ‘[Moving the Mountain](#)’ program, which originated at Harvard University. Moving the Mountain has been offered by [iHuman in Edmonton](#) for the last three years but it’s now part of a three-year pilot project at the U of A – the only place in Canada to offer the program.

Moving the Mountain focuses on hands-on learning rather than traditional lesson plans and writing papers.

“Individuals all over the world need this kind of program for kids that don’t learn in a linear pattern. In other words, they don’t learn in a traditional way and there’s millions and millions of kids like that,” said Wallis Kendar, the program facilitator at the U of A.

“We’re not centering on things like, ‘Who were the last 12 prime ministers?,’” Kendar added. “We’re taking the things that we think are important to them, letting them choose what’s important to them and letting them learn what’s important to them.”

Moving the Mountain is offered to aboriginal youth aged 12 to 21 six days a week from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Participants are asked to attend at least three days a week. Traditional education is worked into the activities, but students also learn practical tasks like cooking meals for themselves.

“If you’re on the streets or something you can just come here and work on things,” said Threefingers, who, until recently, was living in an inner city safe house for about three years. “I’ve learned so much. People are helpful.

“Before Moving the Mountain I was high anxiety,” she said. “I couldn’t cope with it. I would do drugs and drink a lot. I got involved with the wrong people. But after I got in, I stopped drinking, I stopped doing drugs. I’m five months clean and I feel happy. I don’t have anxiety anymore.”

The U of A’s dean of education is extremely pleased to be offering the program. Randy Wimmer said it’s important for institutions to constantly be open to new teaching methods.

“I think there’s always the need to think about our practice as teachers and always think about as many different learning styles as possible,” Wimmer said. “The stars are lining up, particularly around aboriginal education and diversity in education. I think this is a tremendously exciting time for us.”

Harvard University will work with the U of A to run the pilot program and figure out the best teaching methods. This year, three students will be given the opportunity to visit the Moving the Mountain program at Harvard.

The U of A's program is funded through the university and iHuman.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2185737/university-of-alberta-launches-pilot-program-offering-hands-on-education-to-aboriginal-youth/>

Local schools already addressing legacy of First Nations

By Peggy Revell on August 26, 2015.



Students at IF Cox School in Redcliff watch as a teepee is raised at their school in June.--NEWS FILE PHOTO

Educators say recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to address the legacy of Indian residential schools align with many things already underway at local schools.

“There’s obvious connections,” said SD 76 associate superintendent Lyle Cunningham on what is already happening at SD 76, and TRC recommendations released this June. As the school year gets rolling, Cunningham said they will sit down with the division’s First Nation Metis and Inuit program co-ordinator to see how current programming and the recommendations can fit together and benefit students.

Among the 90-plus recommendations, the TRC report calls on federal and provincial governments — in consultation with survivors, aboriginal peoples and educators — to develop mandatory K-12 “age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and aboriginal people’s historic and contemporary contributions to Canada.”

The report also recommends developing resources, teacher-training, information-sharing, best practices and “building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.”

SD 76, Prairie Rose School Division and Medicine Hat Catholic already had FNMI co-ordinators to support aboriginal students, share First Nation culture, traditions and history, and assist teachers.

“(Our co-ordinator has) worked really hard to reach out to First Nation families, and I’m hoping they have perceived that they matter,” said PRSD deputy superintendent Kal Koch. Workshops in schools to promote aboriginal culture have been introduced, and this spring, IF Cox and Senator Gershaw raised teepees with elders from the Blood Tribe reserve.

Last year, Catholic schools put up plaques with the historic federal government apology for residential schools, said Hugh Lehr, the division’s associate superintendent. Staff and students participated in ceremonies to recognize the history.

This “really sparked a lot of education,” said Lehr.

Resources were made available for teachers on residential schools —it’s mainly taught with the social studies curriculum — he noted. The division’s FNMI co-ordinator is there to assist teachers, and is running professional development programs this year.

“A lot of the big recommendations (are provincial and federal). Once those are changed, a huge change falls below,” said Lehr. “Until then, I think we’re doing everything we can around the education pieces and the recognition.”

Some aspects of First Nation history are in provincial curriculum already, including residential schools in Grade 10 or the Iroquois confederacy in Grade 6, Koch said.

But curriculum is overseen by the province.

“I have ministerial staff working on ways by which the residential school element to our curriculum can be accentuated and strengthened,” said Education Minister David Eggen, as ministers look at how to implement TRC recommendations.

Curriculum initiatives can take time to develop, he said, but they are also looking at immediate ways to improve outcomes for FNMI students. This included restoring cuts of \$1.3 million planned by the PC government, which FNMI programming was a part of.

“Both in the retention of students, graduation rates, we know that we have the greatest work to do with FNMI students,” said Eggen.

Consultation will also be a part of the approach.

“It’s very important that we’re working in partnership with First Nation groups,” said Eggen. There are some pilot projects they could possibly replicate, but “it’s very important to not be just dictating from above but working from actual consultation for what FNMI groups want.”

Direct Link: <http://medicinehatnews.com/news/local-news/2015/08/26/local-schools-already-addressing-legacy-of-first-nations/>

Sask. Ministry of Education and First Nations sign accord

Pledge to build working relationship, while recognizing First Nations control of on-reserve education

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 26, 2015 4:30 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 26, 2015 4:48 PM CT



FSIN Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron and Education Minister Don Morgan talk about the agreement they signed in Saskatoon. (Guillaume Dumont/SRC)

It's being called the first of its kind in Canada — an agreement between Saskatchewan's Ministry of Education and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to keep working together, while recognizing First Nations' control of education on reserves.

The agreement was formally signed in Saskatoon Wednesday.

It does not promise any more money than the \$6 million the province already spends to help support on-reserve schooling.

The thrust appears to be mainly symbolic — and perhaps a rebuke, intentional or not, to the federal Conservative government. Its Bill C-33, titled First Nations Control of First Nations Education, is widely seen as anything but that by the chiefs that reject it. Some chiefs in Saskatchewan supported the bill.

"We cannot afford to give up the control and jurisdiction." - *FSIN Vice-Chief Bobby Cameron*

Those chiefs who reject the bill have done so even as the federal government withholds additional funding for education until First Nations support the bill, said FSIN vice-chief Bobby Cameron.

"We cannot afford to give up the control and jurisdiction," said Cameron at today's signing. "That has to remain within each chief and council and their membership."

The agreement also formally recognizes that First Nations' treaty and inherent right to education remains a federal responsibility.

For his part, Saskatchewan's education minister Don Morgan said his main wish is to see more First Nations students complete high school.

High school graduation numbers improving

In 2009, the Grade 12 graduation rate was 72.3 per cent for all students provincially but just 32.7 per cent for Aboriginal students.

The province aims to close that gap by at least half by the year 2020.

"There's a lot of history that's taken place in the past, and what we're intending to do is work with FSIN, work with our partners all the way across the province to try and identify the things that we can do to improve those outcomes," Morgan said.

And indeed, the picture seems to be improving.

Cameron said in 2012 First Nations had 600 high school graduates. That number increased by 50 in each subsequent year (to 650 in 2013, 700 in 2014, and 750 in 2015).

Steps the province has already taken to support First Nations education include a special mentoring program at school and after school, shared speech pathologist services in 16 schools, and the inclusion of First Nations schools in the province's licensing agreement with software giant Microsoft.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/sask-ministry-of-education-and-first-nations-sign-accord-1.3205024>

Brock chancellor aims to inspire aboriginal youths

By [Maryanne Firth](#), St. Catharines Standard

Thursday, August 27, 2015 4:52:00 EDT PM



Recently-appointed Brock University chancellor Shirley Cheechoo and president Jack Lightstone discuss her new role at the school on Thursday, Aug. 27, 2015, in St. Catharines, Ont. Maryanne Firth/St. Catharines Standard/Postmedia Network

Inspiration is what Shirley Cheechoo most hopes to pass on to graduates at Brock University.

The newly-appointed chancellor will be installed to her three-year term at the school's fall convocation ceremony Oct. 17.

An award-winning Cree actress, playwright and filmmaker, Cheechoo is the first woman and aboriginal Canadian to hold the ceremonial leadership role at Brock.

"Growing up, I never dreamed or even thought that I'd be the chancellor of any university," she said Thursday, while going on to express what an honour it is to be chosen.

Raised in the residential school system, Cheechoo, who has won international acclaim for stage work and films that are shaped by her First Nations background, said she was never provided resources to assist in her educational growth. As a result, she has made it her goal to help aboriginal youths access the necessary assistance to fulfill their life ambitions.

It's an accomplishment she has been working toward through the Weengushk Film Institute for aboriginal youth, which she runs on Manitoulin Island.

She believes her new position at Brock will further extend her reach.

The arts advocate is hopeful that when members of the aboriginal community see her in the leadership role, they will aspire to reach similar heights.

"I think it's going to open a lot of doors for people to say, 'Hey, I can do that. There's nothing stopping me from doing what I want to do,'" she said.

When Cheechoo first learned she'd be the first aboriginal woman to take the ceremonial reins, she didn't think much of herself as a pioneer.

"I always try to look at people as equals," she said, while crediting the university for making the historic move.

But women, she said, deserve to take on leadership roles, particularly where the future of the next generation is concerned.

“We’re the ones that bring birth to humanity, we should be leaders,” she said, while urging women to stand up for youths of today.

Cheechoo hopes to continue to promote a culture of diversity at the school, where people of different backgrounds can come together to tell their stories and share their traditions.

“I think anybody who would’ve walked through the halls of Brock eight or 10 years ago and who walks through the halls of Brock now realizes how diverse the student body has become,” university president Jack Lightstone said.

“I think it’s time that our chancellor represents that diversity.”

Each time Brock chooses a new chancellor, a leader is sought who aligns with the school’s vision, Lightstone said.

When former chancellor Ned Goodman — a businessman and philanthropist who stepped down earlier this year — was appointed in 2007, the university was working to develop “one of the quality business schools in Canada,” Lightstone said.

In this new era at Brock, work is being done to help establish downtown St. Catharines as a “hub for arts, culture and the creative industries,” he said, referencing construction of the university’s Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, as well as the city’s FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.

“When we were looking for our next chancellor, we were looking for someone who had a history of accomplishments in the creative industries — and that’s Shirley, certainly.”

Previous Brock chancellors:

1966-69: Richard Hearn, former chairman of Ontario Hydro.

1969-74: Charles Sankey, former vice-president of Ontario Paper Company.

1974-80: Cecil Shaver, internationally-known expert on respiratory diseases.

1980-85: Ralph Misener, president of Misener Steamships Co.

1985-2000: Robert Welch, St. Catharines lawyer and former deputy prime minister of Ontario.

2001-07: Raymond Moriyama, renowned architect who designed the Chown Complex, as well as other Brock buildings.

2007-2015: Ned Goodman, geologist, mining executive, investment advisor and philanthropist for whom Brock's Goodman School of Business is named.

Direct Link: <http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/2015/08/27/brock-chancellor-aims-to-inspire-aboriginal-youths>

Take aboriginal issues seriously

By Ken MacDougall, The Starphoenix August 27, 2015

MacDougall is a systems analyst and teacher on the Muskoday First Nation.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau flew into Saskatoon on Aug. 13 accompanied by MP Ralph Goodale and former FSIN Vice-Chief Lawrence Joseph, and announced with much fanfare that a Liberal government's first priority would be to address the shortfall in educational spending for First Nations students.

He earmarked \$2.6 billion over four years to this task, including \$500 million for infrastructure improvements. The \$2.6 billion may sound like a big boost for providing educational services for First Nations, but it's also a whopping big target for Conservatives, who already are labelling the Liberals and New Democrats as out of control spendthrifts.

So how did the Liberals come up with that amount, and toward what purpose will this money be deployed?

Two years ago, former FSIN Vice-Chief Simon Bird publicly excoriated Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt for misleading the public on how much the federal government spends on aboriginal education, pinning the discrepancy between public versus federal allocation of resources to be in excess of \$4,000 per student nationally.

Statistics Canada says there are approximately 260,000 First Nations children of school age. When distributed over four years, Trudeau's commitment amounts to an increase of \$2,500 per child annually, thus spanning only 65 per cent of the gap and leaving nothing to spend on postsecondary or adult education.

So, it's clear that Trudeau's commitment is just a number that sounds better than recent Conservative offerings, but not by much.

When an aboriginal student attends a public school, his/her reserve is billed for the public division's per student allocation. Using the Liberals' commitment, the on-reserve budget is thus yearly "shorted" by \$1,500 per student.

Further depletion occurs when public administrators supplement their own inadequate budgets by categorizing most indigenous students as "special needs" and then using the

additional money to cover the school's underfunded extracurricular activities - a practice Aboriginal Affairs does little to curtail. First Nation leaders are their worst enemy when trying to argue for supplementary educational funding. No one questions that, were such equalized funding to be provided, aboriginal students would fare better in an increasingly competitive economic environment. Were the Assembly of First Nations to provide a well-researched policy position with targeted areas of educational

needs, a strategy for resolving existing problems and document resource requirements to ensure that goals are attained, a useful public discussion could begin.

Instead, the leaders continue to use buzzwords such as "cultural genocide" and "respecting our language, culture and traditions" while they demand full control of spending. This, in turn, allows Conservatives to claim that First Nations leaders have no agenda for action and no desire to be "held accountable" for how they allocate resources.

The public yawns, and the problems remain.

Teachers who have worked within the First Nations educational system can easily identify key funding areas that require revamping. For instance, while the curriculum exists to provide credits for aboriginal language instruction, there simply aren't enough trained teachers to instruct them.

Early Childhood Education and primary level specialists are at a premium. Literacy, science and mathematics specialists are non-existent. Teacher aides require subject grade training. Education degrees don't address cross-cultural or methodology training inadequacies, much less the need for increased training in counselling techniques.

In short, the educators also need an extended educational process.

"Non-educational" funding needs must also be removed from standardized school budgets. Amenities such as housing or travel aren't "educational." They are services essential to providing the best possible staffing to fill remote reserve students' needs while ameliorating the annual revolving door of staff leaving to find other jobs.

Bands being able to pay the provincial wage scale would decrease teacher migration and increase the availability of mentors to new staff. It would also encourage core subjecttrained aboriginal teachers to become role models on reserves instead of choosing the public sector. These are our people, deserving of opportunities to provide professional and trade services to their people and others to aid in managing society's complex infrastructure and technology. Their survival demands such consideration.

Neither the Conservative nor Liberal agendas have moved toward thinking through a solution to the emancipation of First Nations. Throwing numbers at something and calling it a solution solves nothing; it only says that politicians simply want the problem to go away - at least until the next election.

The NDP has yet to articulate policies on First Nations issues. It must therefore articulate, using leader Thomas Mulcair's words, a "balanced and reasoned" approach, or leave aboriginals the choice of whether to vote or stay home because they're still being used as pawns in the electoral process.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Take+aboriginal+issues+seriously/11320662/story.html>

Westbank First Nations holds ground blessing ceremony for new youth centre



Construction is underway on the new 14,000 square foot youth centre.
— *image credit: Sawyer Klassen*

by [Sawyer Klassen - Kelowna Capital News](#)

posted Aug 25, 2015 at 10:00 AM— updated Aug 25, 2015 at 5:06 PM

Westbank First Nations (WFN) has officially begun a new multi-million dollar construction project.

WFN is constructing a new youth centre, and held a ground blessing ceremony Monday morning. Construction just recently began on the 14,000 square foot project, which along with a sports court has a budget of \$6 million. Chief Robert Louie said there is an immediate need for a new youth centre, as the existing one was purchased second hand in 1998 and can no longer meet the needs of the community.

A new youth centre has been part of WFN's capital plan since 2010, and Chief Louie explained he was proud to be building the youth of their community a new, state-of-the-art, modern facility that will also be available to youth from other communities. He added the new facility will provide recreation for the entire region and increase tourism.

The new youth centre will have many features including a learning garden and outdoor classrooms, and will fill many different uses for the community and the ability to rent space within it for events. Construction is anticipated to be completed in November of 2016, at which time they will begin building an adjacent sports court that will be the size of three basketball courts. The sports court is scheduled to be done by July 2017.

Direct Link: <http://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/322841881.html>

Aboriginal Health

What We Can Learn From Traditional Arctic Diets

by [Mark Hay](#)

Up in the arctic, life struggles to thrive. [A rocky and frigid landscape](#) supporting little more than meager shrubs, grasses, and some berries in the summer, it's proven too hostile for more than a few animal species that have specially evolved to polar environs. Yet despite the harsh conditions, thousands of years ago human beings managed to etch out a life for themselves in the snows. These peoples' ability to live in these regions is mostly due to a diet that to most of us seems narrow and anemic, but in truth has proven itself one of the most robust and healthy in the world.

Arctic diets vary vastly from region to region, according to the local environment's flora and fauna. But [at their most extreme](#), they consist of almost nothing but meat and fish, often from animals rich in fat (think polar bears, seabirds, and whales). For those of us who grew up learning the [American Food Pyramid](#), or even the unholy devilcraft that is the new ["My Plate" system](#), such a meat-heavy diet sounds borderline suicidal. But when eaten raw, these animals' organs provide [ample nutrients](#), including the vitamins we temperate-zoners draw mostly from plants. Blubber is also surprisingly rich in heart-healthy monounsaturated and [polyunsaturated omega-3 fats](#) and [natural fermentation](#) provides arctic diets with the benefits of probiotic foods. The result is a food regimen that provides everything a human needs, as well as one of the greatest natural defenses against [diabetes, heart disease](#), certain types of cancer, and perhaps [even seasonal effective disorder](#), illustrating that in any diet, there are no essential food groups, just essential nutrients.

But in recent generations, it's been harder and harder for peoples in the arctic to eat their traditional foods. During the 20th century, [nation-state expansion into the arctic](#), often for military purposes, led to displacement, forced settlement, and new economic incentives, drawing people away from their old lifestyles and hunting practices. Global warming has also started to take a toll, [damaging the food chain from the bottom](#) up faster than in other parts of the world and contaminating the environment of surviving species. The end result

is [fewer hunters and gatherers](#) moving further afield, often at greater personal risk, with less communal support for a diminishing return of often toxin-ridden game.

These days, very few arctic families eat a fully traditional diet, supplementing traditional foods with costly, imported, and processed Western fare. In Canada's Inuit lands (some of the best studied in regards to food security), at least 65 percent of homes use traditional foods in less than half their meals, often replacing the remainder with fatty and sugary items. The reliance on Western foods and the increasing cost of rarer traditional foods has led to massive spikes in diseases arctic peoples used to be particularly resistant to, the decline of communal cultures built around hunting and food preparation, and increasing food insecurity. According to one study released in 2008, amongst Canada's Inuit about 70 percent of all households were labeled as food insecure.

Fortunately, some people are dedicated to reviving and preserving the lessons of arctic diets. Though the ecosystems and lifestyles that supported these diets may be irreparably damaged, recent initiatives have aimed to [re-popularize traditional foods](#) with young people, offer access to ingredients, and preserve threatened environments. These projects are helping to make sure the modern world doesn't totally bury arctic culinary traditions, the insights they may hold for us in terms of nutrition, and of the rough-and-ready, environmentally-sensitive adaptability that brought them into being.

[Anna Sigrithur](#), age 25, is one of the folks studying, preserving, and spreading knowledge of arctic diets. A cook from Winnipeg obsessed with ingredients from Canada's rural, snowy bits, Sigrithur recently became a research intern at the [Nordic Food Lab](#), an outfit that explores the diversity and potential of Scandinavian foods using chemistry and far-out experimental cookery. (Last year, [the Nordic Food Lab taught GOOD](#) everything we could ever want to know about cooking with blood.)

Sigrithur recently spent a summer living with a group of [Sami](#) people—one of Europe's last indigenous groups living in the far northern [Lapland](#)—who were hard at work preserving their own culinary traditions. (Unlike most arctic people, the Sami also herd reindeer.) I recently caught up with Sigrithur to talk about Sami foods, the goals and fruits of her research, and what the rest of us can learn when we directly or indirectly encounter these astounding foodways.

How did you get interested in arctic cuisines, and in researching Sami foods?

I'm a self-trained cook. I do a lot of culinary experimentation at home. I have a catering business. Manitoba, where I usually live, is a sub-boreal ecosystem, so not too far off from the arctic, really. I also study indigenous food systems as well as economics, so I have an interest in how indigenous peoples around the world, and traditional societies, survive in their environments, which are facing a lot of modernization pressure. And then [I'm also interested] in the culinary aspects, like 'what are people eating? Is it delicious? How do they cook it?'

What are the most interesting, engaging, or attractive elements of Sami food?

It's this deliciousness that comes out of harshness. It's a tough environment to live and have food in. But they eat this entire diversity of food that's around them [in what] seems on the surface like a restrictive environment to be eating from.

What are your personal favorite Sami foods and traditions?

I really enjoyed the reindeer blood. That was delicious, getting to eat some of this raw blood.

The metallic flavor wasn't a problem for you? I know it is for a lot of people.

No, it wasn't so metallic tasting. It was salty. It was kind of unctuous. But it didn't even taste like it came from an animal. It just tasted so clean.

I really enjoyed [taking] the inner bark, the outer bark of various trees and learning to grind them and make various flatbreads. Scandinavian people are all about their thin, flat breads so they made all sorts of different crackers with pine bark flour, birch bark flour. That was both so delicious and so inspiring because trees are everywhere, and the bark is very abundant. So that was fun to learn.

Are you a proponent of the health aspects of arctic food?

I'm not a nutritionist, so I don't think about that as much. But I tend to think that any traditional diet is a healthy one, because you can't survive for thousands of years and gain a food tradition if it's not healthy and balanced in some way.

A lot of arctic peoples are losing their traditional foodways to modernization. Are the Sami in the same boat? And if so, are they pushing back against that loss?

Of course. People are going to eat whatever's available to them and convenient, just like anybody does. And yes, I think a lot of Sami families eat more of a Westernized diet than not.

The woman I was staying with, she has become this cultural and food instructor because of a lack of other people who are teaching these food skills. She has talked about the fact that she feels there needs to be more people like her who are preserving this food knowledge and championing it and teaching the next generations, because as the generations go forward people will lose more and more of this knowledge.

What are the big challenges for this woman in trying to preserve her foodways?

She's not very old, but she's growing more elderly. A lot of these foods require a communal effort. You can't live on a traditional diet by yourself because it's really too much work. Communities do come together for the reindeer herding and the calf marking. They share the work for that, and that's really evident in the northern communities.

But ... she really relies on people coming and helping her in order to get everything done in terms of harvesting, drying, and processing these foods. It isn't a part-time pursuit. To do this, you really have to revolve your life around your food. That's probably one of the biggest reasons that it's dying out. People are becoming more divided [with] the dissolving of community structures in favor of a more nuclear family unit and things like that.

I know she has a daughter who has been very keen on participating and learning all of her wisdom, so her daughter is definitely carrying that forward into another generation.

What can people like me, in the wider world, adopt or learn from Sami foodways?

I don't think that people should adopt the Sami foodways if they're not living in an arctic environment. They don't have access to these foods. It would be nice if people could try reindeer, though. That's a market that supports the Sami people and their husbandry.

Maybe just a curiosity about how to be more resourceful with the resources around you. This is something in most indigenous cultures, not just the Sami, but they use every part of the animal and have various preservation methods to store the meat. For folk getting more interested in hunting or trying to eat meat in a sustainable way, you can glean some insight from that. But in general I just hope that people become aware of the Sami, because in my experience people just don't know that they exist and they're not aware of the pressures facing them.

Is there anything else you want us to know about your work?

The Sami culture, like a lot of arctic cultures around the world, is being threatened. Change is affecting the way that the water melts and how the reindeer migrate and how many calves drown when they're passing these big streams. Hydroelectric development is a big thing affecting their lands. Property ownership structures make it difficult for them to assert land rights.

Something that my teacher impressed upon me is that they need help and they need the world to be more aware of them. They need the Swedish and Norwegian governments to allow them to continue practicing their sovereignty.

Do you think they'll be able to survive all of those pressures culturally?

Yeah, I think the Sami culture is a really strong one. It's rooted in this activity of reindeer herding which, as far as I've experienced, people practice really strongly. Perhaps [even] more strongly than, say, 30-40 years go. I think there's been a bit of an ethno-political renaissance.

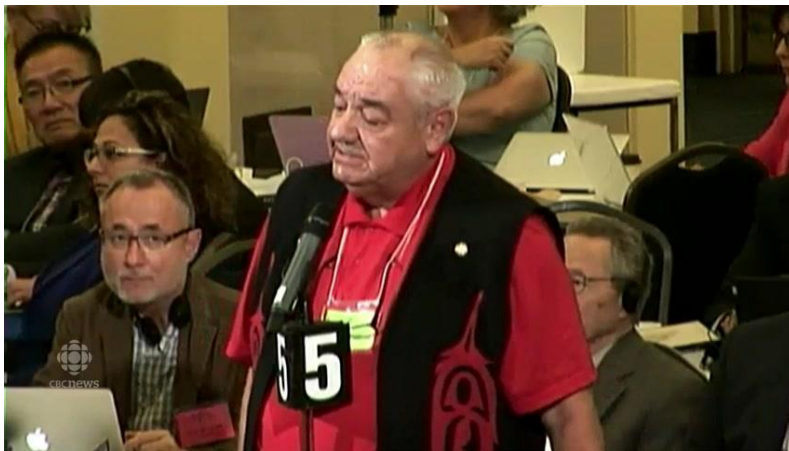
So I think the Sami culture's going to continue to be strong. And that is nice for people like my teacher, who is a big champion of their foods and language.

Direct Link: <http://magazine.good.is/articles/preserving-arctic-foodways-sami-people-inuit-diet>

Ted Quewezance blasts First Nations' access to health care

'That attitude that we're not Canadians'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 27, 2015 9:09 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 27, 2015 3:41 PM CT



A prominent Saskatchewan First Nations leader is setting his sights on the health care system.

Ted Quewezance is former chief of the Keeseekoose First Nation. He's also a residential school survivor.

Quewezance claims that First Nations are poorly served by the health care system, both in terms of access and attitude. Even sorting out who is responsible is a challenge.

"Within our region, it's whose responsibility is it? Is it the federal responsibility or is it the health authority within the district where you live," he said in an interview.

Quewezance also said that First Nations patients simply don't get the same level of service as other patients.

"It's that mentality of individuals, that attitude that we're not Canadians and they tend to do what you have to do. If I go to a doctor they don't ask you nothing, they just write you a prescription."

Quewezance spoke this week at the Canadian Medical Association general meeting.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/ted-quewezance-blasts-first-nations-access-to-health-care-1.3205657>

Aboriginal History

250th anniversary of British-Inuit treaty marked in Labrador

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 20, 2015 5:50 PM NT Last Updated: Aug 20, 2015 5:50 PM NT



Todd Russell, a former MP who now leads the NunatuKavut Community Council, says the 1765 treaty marked an important part of Newfoundland and Labrador history. (CBC)

Members of the NunatuKavut community on Thursday celebrated the 250th anniversary of a British-Inuit treaty in Mary's Harbour, in southern Labrador.

The treaty was signed in August 1765 to establish peace and friendship between the two groups.

"There were decades and decades of strife. It came to a point where people said we need to enter into a better relationship," said Todd Russell, president of the NunatuKavut Community Council, which represents descendants of Inuit who live in southern Labrador.

"This treaty was the culmination of a lot of work, a lot of preparation, and two peoples, two nations, saying we want to get along, we want a better way forward," Russell said in an interview with *Labrador Morning*.

"Today we still seeking that positive relationship with now the NL government and the Canadian government."

"We want to be able to have a better life for our children, and for our great-grandchildren," said Russell.

Celebrations continue tonight with traditional tents showcasing different communities, and lots of dancing, singing, and smoked salmon.

"When I looked at it this morning, when I looked up on the hill and I saw those tents, it just took me back to 250 years ago when people were assembling tents then."

"They were waiting in anticipation for what was going to be a very very special and significant time in their lives and now in ours" said Russell.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/250th-anniversary-of-british-inuit-treaty-marked-in-labrador-1.3198186>

Monument to pay homage to 'pivotal' role of First Nations

Part in Laura Secord trek, Battle of Beaverdams to be commemorated



Kim Lundberg, left, and Weldon Titus portray Mohawk warriors, who played a pivotal role in the Battle of Beaverdams, during the 200th anniversary celebration of the battle at Decew House Heritage Park in Thorold in June of 2013. A monument paying homage to the role of First Nations people in Laura Secord's walk and the battle is planned for the park.

Niagara This Week - St. Catharines
By [Paul Forsyth](#), Aug 24, 2015

THOROLD — A monument paying homage to the pivotal role played by First Nations people in Laura Secord's heroic trek — and the ensuing Battle of Beaverdams that saw invading U.S. soldiers soundly defeated — could be in place by next summer.

That monument, known as the First Nations stone hearth monument, belongs in the

Decew House Heritage Park in Thorold, said Secord descendent Caroline McCormick and David Brown, a Brock University professor and board member of the Friends of Laura Secord group that McCormick is president of.

McCormick told Thorold city council on Aug. 11 that the monument will recognize the First Nations' "pivotal role in the defining of Canada" and their involvement in the story of Secord's famous 32-kilometre trek from Queenston.

She's said to have travelled through dense bush to bring warning to the British garrison at Decew House of the advancing force of about 600 American soldiers.

"Exhausted and terrified" after fighting through inhospitable wilderness, Secord stumbled upon an encampment of British-allied First Nations fighters, who brought her to meet Lieut. James Fitzgibbon at the garrison, said McCormick.

Two days later, a force of mostly native soldiers hiding in the beechwoods of northeastern Thorold township ambushed the Americans and defeated them in a crucial battle in the War of 1812.

The planned new monument will be a symbolic testament to the collaboration and sacrifices of the First Nations people, said McCormick.

"It's an expression of gratitude to the First Nations people for their role in shaping the nation that was to become Canada," she said.

Brown said the design concept for the monument, which would be circular with integrated seating and inscribed stones from home territories of native tribes that fought, is largely based on input from First Nations partners.

The design criteria include the monument being durable, low maintenance and consistent with First Nation principles, he said.

The Friends group has the funds for survey and design work, landscaping, site preparation and construction of the monument and an accessible trail at the park, said Brown. The stone has already been donated by a quarry.

The monument will stress Thorold's "often overlooked" importance in Canada's history and will serve as a new tourism destination for the city, said Brown.

Thorold city politicians unanimously endorsed the concept of the monument in principle. The next steps include a city staff report on the issue, official city approval, site preparation, installing the monument, and then a dedication ceremony by summer 2016, said Brown.

Other possible locations for the monument were considered: an earlier plan was for the monument to be placed at Decew's Field — where it's believed Secord met with the native fighters — that's now part of the property behind the Region's Decew Falls water treatment plant. The City of St. Catharines directed staff to work with the Friends group on that concept back in 2014.

But Brown said the Friends group eventually chose the Decew House park as the best location.

Plans call for the monument to be a 'living' one, in which people who visit it bring stones from near their homes and leave them as symbolic gifts.

Direct Link: <http://www.niagarathisweek.com/news-story/5811646-monument-to-pay-homage-to-pivotal-role-of-first-nations/>

New children's book helps celebrate 250 years since Inuit-British treaty

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 25, 2015 5:00 AM NT Last Updated: Aug 25, 2015 5:00 AM NT



Todd Russell reads Caubvik's Summer to a group of children at celebrations for the 250th anniversary of the Inuit-British treaty. (Jamie Skidmore)

On the anniversary of the Labrador Inuit-British treaty, an author and an illustrator have come together to release a new children's book to celebrate.

Author Janet McNaughton and illustrator Cynthia Colosimo were behind *Caubvik's Summer*, which was launched to allow young Labradorians to learn about their history.

"They wanted legacy, so more than a year ago the NunatuKavut approached me about helping them do a children's book," McNaughton told CBC's *Weekend AM*.

"I started looking at the historical records and it was very well documented, so it would be possible to tell the story from the perspective of a small Inuit girl."



Celebrations took part last week in Mary's Harbour last week to celebrate the Inuit-British treaty. (Jamie Skidmore)

McNaughton got many of her ideas for the book from historical records and archives. While it is a fictional story meant for children, she did include sidebars with historical information to put it all into context.

She said that it's important to celebrate the treaty, even though the events that led to it were often dark and tragic.

"There were some pretty disturbing stories," she said.

"There was a period of extreme unrest when Inuit territory was being encroached upon by Europeans more and more."

In one unconfirmed case, she said, a group of Americans kidnapped some Inuit, and then — when worried about being caught — killed them and threw them overboard on their way back to New England.

Caubvik's Summer premiered at celebrations in Mary's Harbour last week, which marked 250 years since the signing of the treaty.

Colosimo said children and adults alike seem to be responding well to the book. She also said it was no easy task making sure her drawings properly captured the look and feel of Inuit culture of more than two centuries ago.

"Drawing the faces, they are actually portraits of southern Labrador Inuit people who went to England and had their portrait done," she said.

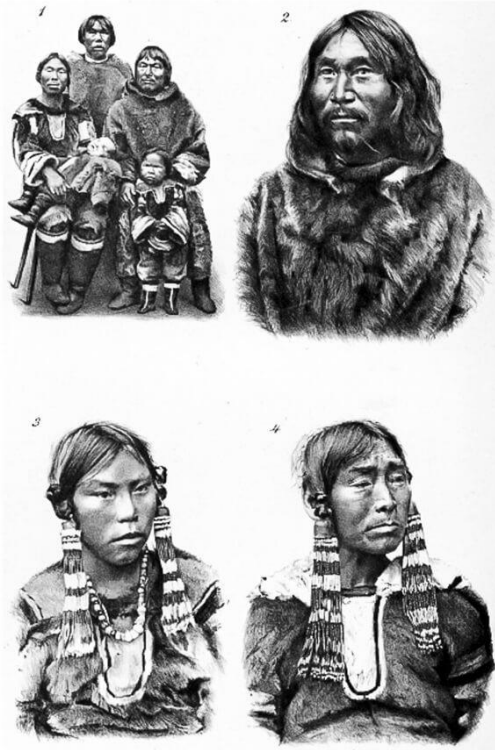
"I had to be meticulous. These are my neighbours."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/new-children-s-book-helps-celebrate-250-years-since-inuit-british-treaty-1.3201562> 0

Eight Labrador Inuit trapped in a 19th century human zoo

134 years after their death in Europe, their wish to come home should be fulfilled

by [France Rivet](#) August 26, 2015



W. A. Meyer Lith.

Verlag von PAUL PAREY in Berlin.

"It is too long until the year is over because we would very much like to return to our country, because we are unable to stay here forever, yes indeed, it is impossible!"

In October 1880, when Abraham, a 35-year-old Christian Inuk from [Hebron, Labrador](#), wrote these words, he had been in Germany for less than one month. His decision to travel to Europe had been most difficult. First, because the [Moravian missionaries](#) were totally opposed to the idea of seeing baptized Inuit displayed like animals in front of European crowds. Second, because he would be leaving his mother behind. But, [Johan Adrian Jacobsen](#), a 27-year-old Norwegian hired by German menagerie owner [Carl Hagenbeck](#), had arrived at a time when Abraham and his family were suffering from

great poverty. Abraham therefore saw Jacobsen's offer to earn money in exchange for demonstrating his way of life to the public, as a sign from God that this was the path away from misery. The opportunities to see Europe's splendours, to meet with Moravian missionaries he had befriended in Labrador, and to visit Herrnhut, the center of the Moravian church, were also strong incentives. So, when Jacobsen promised to supply Abraham's mother with all the provisions she would need until his return, Abraham let himself be convinced to embark on the voyage.



Hebron, on Labrador's north coast. (Photo by France Rivet)

Abraham was accompanied by his wife Ulrike, 24, and their two daughters Sara, 3, and Maria, 9 months. A young single man from Hebron, Tobias, 20, also decided to join them. Finally, as Jacobsen's interpreter, during a trip to [Nachvak fjord](#), Abraham convinced a traditional Inuit family of three: Tigianniak, a 45-year-old shaman, his wife Paingu, 50, and their daughter Nuggasak, 15.



Tigianniak crossing of the Atlantic. Illustration by Hoffmann

The group departed for Europe on August 26, 1880. The crossing of the Atlantic was most challenging for the Inuit as they all greatly suffered from sea sickness, and as Abraham reported, they had lost hope of ever seeing land again. But, on September 24, the *Eisbär* with the Inuit, their dogs, their kayaks, their fishing and hunting gear, and their personal belongings safely arrived at its destination: Hamburg. The group was immediately taken to Carl Hagenbeck's residence. For the next two weeks, his backyard, home to his menagerie, was buzzing with activity as visitors came to see the exotic animals, and the Eskimos.

On Friday, October 15, 1880, the group boarded the train for the overnight trip to Berlin. It did not take long for the crowds and the constant noise to start bothering the Inuit.

The very first sentence of Abraham's diary reads,

In Berlin, it is not really nice since it is impossible because of people and trees, indeed, because so many children come. The air is constantly buzzing from the sound of the walking and driving; our enclosure is filled up immediately.

Abraham also quickly realized that coming to Europe was a mistake:

In different kinds of ways we have been lured, but even all this I didn't recognize... It became clear to us how well we were taken care of in our country, yes indeed, long and great are the blessings we receive... We often suffer from colds, too, are often sick in Berlin, and are very homesick. We miss our land, our relatives, and our church. Yes indeed, we had to learn from our mistakes.



Labrador Inuit in front of a hut - illustration published in Prague's Svetozor weekly newspaper, 1880.

The Inuit were exhibited at the Berlin zoo for one month. Their tour then took them to Prague, Frankfurt, and Darmstadt where, on December 14, tragedy struck: the young Nuggasak suddenly died.

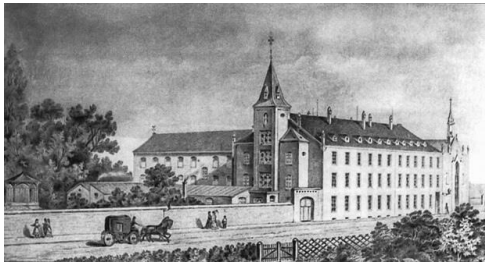
Johan Adrian Jacobsen noted in his diary,

At 8 o'clock in the morning we awoke to the shout "Nuggasak is dead!" You may well imagine our shock. The physician diagnosed a rapid stomach ulcer as having caused the death. The poor parents did not stop crying from morning until evening. Of course it also had a very depressing effect on the others and on us as well.

The group moved on to Krefeld, near the Belgian border, where they were exhibited at the Bockum Zoo. It is here that they celebrated their last Christmas. In the evening of

December 25, Paingu suddenly fell ill with the same symptoms as Nuggasak. For the next two days, doctors came and reassured the group that there was no need to worry: Paingu was suffering from rheumatism. Unfortunately, at 7 p.m. on December 27, ten minutes after the doctor had left, Paingu died. She was buried in the Krefeld cemetery the next day.

"The husband [Tigianniak] is very sad, of course, and expressed his wish to be able to accompany his wife and daughter soon", reported Jacobsen.



Alexianer Hospital in Krefeld, 1883. (Courtesy of Alexianer Hospital)

Two days later, 3-year-old Sara became ill. For the first time, doctors recognized the signs of [smallpox](#). The child's admission to the hospital was most urgent. Jacobsen fought with Abraham and Ulrike who did not want to part from their child, but, in the end Abraham accompanied his daughter to the hospital. He described the sad events as follows:

[...] little Sara stopped living, peacefully, with a great rash and swellings [...] After two days of being sick, she died in Krefeld. While she was still alive, she was brought to the hospital, where I went with her. She still had her mind, while I was there. She prayed with the song *Ich bin ein kleines kindelein* (I am a little child, you see). When I wanted to leave, she sent her greetings to her mother and little sister. When I left her, she slept; from then on, she did not wake up anymore. For this we both had reason to be thankful. While she was still alive we went to Paris and travelled the whole day and the whole night through.

The five surviving Inuit arrived in Paris on December 31, 1880. As requested by the authorities, they were vaccinated upon their arrival. They were exhibited from January 1 to 6 at the [Jardin d'acclimatation](#), in the Bois de Boulogne, and for a few days, they dared think the worst was behind them.

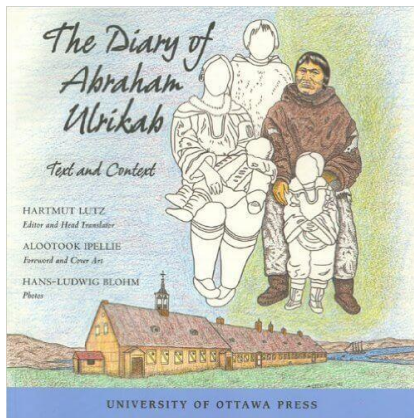
On January 8, 1881, Abraham wrote his very last letter to his friend, Brother Elsner.

Our superior does buy a lot of medicine, no doubt, but all this still does not help; but I trust in God that He will hear my prayers and will collect all my tears, every day. I do not long for earthly possessions, but this is what I long for: to see my relatives again, who are over there, [...] My dear teacher Elsner, pray for us to the Lord that the evil sickness, will stop if it is His will; but may God's will be fulfilled. I am a poor man who's dust.

The next morning, Abraham, Ulrike, Maria, Tobias, and Tigianniak were admitted to [St-Louis Hospital](#) in Paris where, from January 10 to January 16, 1881 they died, one after the other.

Jacobsen, who had been admitted to the hospital alongside the Inuit, because of intermittent fever, wrote in his diary:

Ulrike died this morning at 2 o'clock – the last of the eight – horrible. Should I be indirectly responsible for their death? Did I just have to lead these poor honest people from their home to find their graves here on foreign soil? Oh, how everything became so totally different than I had thought. Everything went so well in the beginning. We had only now gotten to know each other and begun to hold each other dear.



Cover of "The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab: Text and Context" by Hartmut Lutz

Following the Inuit's death, some of their belongings, including Abraham's diary, and the money they had earned for their work in Europe, were returned to Hebron, Labrador. There, Moravian missionary Kretschmer translated Abraham's diary to German. A copy of his translation was discovered in 1980 by Canadian ethnologist James Garth Taylor, who brought it to the attention of the 20th century public. Twenty-five years later, in 2005, German Professor Hartmut Lutz--assisted by his students--produced a new English translation and further researched the story. Their work was published in the book, *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab: Text and Context*.

In summer 2009, as I was traveling on a cruise ship along the Labrador Coast, I met master photographer [Hans-Ludwig Blohm](#) who introduced me to Abraham's story. I had never heard of ordinary people being exhibited in zoos just because they came from faraway lands. I was shocked, fascinated, and moved by Abraham's words. But, the story was incomplete. The book was silent on what happened in Paris after the Inuit's death. Where had they been buried? What happened to their remains?

On board the ship, Hans and I met Zipporah Nochasak, a Labrador Inuk who's family originates from Hebron and wears the same name as Nuggasak, the first of the Inuit to have died in Europe. Zipporah had just discovered Abraham's story and was still very much upset. My mother tongue being French, I promised Hans and Zipporah that I would investigate whenever time allowed.

About a year into my research, I uncovered documents about anthropologists in Paris having studied Paingu's [skullcap](#), as well as the plaster casts of the brains of Abraham, Ulrike, and Tobias. I immediately emailed museums in Paris to inquire if they had such items in their collections. The next morning, a reply arrived from Mr. Philippe Mennecier, of the [Muséum national d'Histoire Naturelle](#):

Mrs. Rivet we have the regret to inform you that we do not have the brain casts, but we do have the skullcap as well as... the fully-mounted skeletons of the five Labrador Inuit who died in Paris in January 1881.

Mr. Mennecier's email also explained where the Inuit had been buried, and how their remains made their way into the museum's collection. I was speechless. The possibility that the Inuit's remains would still be in Paris had never crossed my mind. As I tried to figure out the implications of such an announcement, I remembered how the Inuit longed to return to Labrador. The Museum's email was opening a door to having their wish come true.



Abraham and Tobias in their kayaks - illustration published in Prague's Svetozor weekly newspaper, 1880.

Within a few weeks, I was sitting in Mr. Menecier's office. He explained that the museum would not dispute a request for repatriation as the remains have an identity. That said, such a request must be funneled through our two countries' diplomatic channels, and be initiated by either descendants, or the Inuit's community of origin. Since life had decided that I was the one to be told about the Inuit remains still being in Paris, I felt that it was my responsibility, my mission, to do everything I could to bring them back.

I informed the [Nunatsiavut](#) government (the self-government of the Labrador Inuit), as well as the diplomatic authorities in Ottawa, Paris and Berlin. The Nunatsiavut government confirmed that something had to be done, but before they could put the wheels in motion, it was mandatory for them to get a comprehensive picture of the past events.

Over the next three years (2011-2013), I traveled to Europe to gather as many 19th century documents and photographs as possible. I also searched for artifacts associated with Abraham and his group, and for the remains of the three Inuit who had died in Germany.

Along the way, film producer Roch Brunette (Pix3 Films), heard about Abraham's story and my research through a local newspaper article published in the Ottawa-Gatineau area. Intrigued, he called me up. A year later, he had gathered the support of Canadian TV broadcasters as well as the required financing to start filming a documentary, *Trapped in a Human Zoo*.

The filming started in September 2014, as I headed to Nain, Labrador's northernmost community, to present the results of my 3-year investigation to the Nunatsiavut government, and to Nain's elders committee. The elders listened very carefully, asked several questions, and reached a consensus: the remains must be brought back home. This visit to Nain also served as the public announcement of the finding of the remains.



Nain Elder Johannes Lampe (left) speaking with The scientific head of the Anthropological Collections of the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Dr. Alain Froment. (Photo by France Rivet)

The filming of the documentary provided the opportunity for Johannes Lampe, Nain's chief elder and Nunatsiavut's former Minister of culture, to retrace Abraham's footsteps in Europe.



Johannes Lampe and Hartmut Lutz at the Museum of Ethnology, Hamburg. (Photo by France Rivet)

For two weeks, in fall 2014, Johannes immersed himself in Abraham's story. He navigated on the Elbe River to get a feel for what the Inuit first saw when they landed in Europe (coincidentally, he did so on the exact same date that the Inuit sailed into the Elbe River 134 years earlier); he walked around the zoos where they showed their way of life to the European crowds; he met with the descendants of Johan Adrian Jacobsen, and Carl Hagenbeck, the two men who recruited and orchestrated the Inuit's exhibition; he talked with Professor Hartmut Lutz, the translator of Abraham and Jacobsen's diaries; he visited archives and saw original documents in which the Inuit's names had been written; he held artifacts that represent tangible proofs of the Labrador Inuit's presence in Europe; and, Johannes felt the homesickness that affected his countrymen in 1880.

The most moving and disturbing moment of the trip was undoubtedly seeing the human remains which are preserved in the museum's reserves among a collection of 18,000 skulls and 2,000 skeletons. As the curators explained, this collection was mainly built in the late 19th century, at a time when anthropologists were aiming to sample all of mankind, to study human diversity. Nowadays, this collection is accessible only to researchers upon justification. That said, the 200 or so remains which have an identity are

off limit to any study. We were granted permission to see the Labrador Inuit remains as our visit was in the context of an eventual repatriation request.

All parties involved have demonstrated that they want to continue collaborating towards the remains being returned home. Even Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and French president François Hollande gave their blessing when, on June 14, 2013, they signed the [Canada-France Enhanced Cooperation Agenda](#) in which we find the following commitment to: "Work with the appropriate authorities to help to repatriate Inuit bones from French museum collections to Canada."

For Johannes, seeing the remains convinced him of the necessity to bring them home:

We feel Abraham and his family wanted to come back home to their homeland. That is a wish that has to be granted. Most certainly we, as the descendants of our ancestors, have a responsibility to do what our ancestors have asked. [...] I have come here to be a representative of the Labrador Inuit of today, to see the Labrador Inuit of yesterday, the human remains, and so I have seen with my own eyes, and I have felt what it is that Labrador Inuit feel. Very sad, and at the same time, I am happy that Labrador Inuit will now know that the remains of Abraham, and his family, are in Paris, and that we have something to work on.

The Nunatsiavut government is currently in the process of [defining its policy on the repatriation of human remains and burial objects from archaeological sites](#). Public consultations were held in June 2015. The results of these consultations will be made public in the fall 2015 before being taken to the [Nunatsiavut Executive Council](#) for final review and approval. This step must be completed before the official request for repatriation is forwarded to the federal government.

The Nunatsiavut government is also trying to identify living descendants of Abraham's and Tigianniak's families. If any descendants are identified, they will be invited to discuss the next steps in the repatriation process.

As Johannes explained, through the mysterious appearance of a butterfly in the library of the Museum of Ethnology in Hamburg, even the spirits found a way to tell us that they are delighted with the actions currently being taken in this world. It should be just a matter of time before the spirits can be set free, before the remains come home, before the Labrador Inuit community can finally close the loop on this tragic story, and hopefully, before little Sara is reunited with her family.

Direct Link: <https://intercontinentalcry.org/eight-labrador-inuit-trapped-in-a-19th-century-human-zoo/>

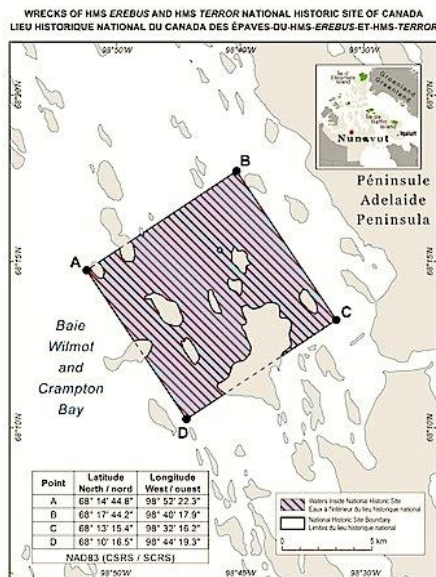
Parks Canada eyes National Historic Site in Nunavut for Franklin wrecks

Divers now poking around "Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site"

JANE GEORGE, August 26, 2015 - 7:04 am



Parks Canada underwater archaeologist Filippo Ronca measures the muzzle bore diameter of one of two cannons found on the site, serving to identify this gun as a brass six-pounder. (PHOTO COURTESY OF PARKS CANADA)



This map, part of Parks Canada's application to the Nunavut Impact Review Board, shows where ships and divers will look at the HMS Erebus and continue to scout around for signs of the HMS Terror.

A former fishing boat-turned-research vessel, the Martin Bergmann, a smaller 35-foot vessel, Parks Canada's Investigator, the CCGS Sir Wilfrid Laurier and some smaller zodiacs are now plying the waters outside Gjoa Haven, around Wilmot and Crampton bays, to see what they can find.

The goal, according to documents available on the [Nunavut Impact Review Board's website](#): to build knowledge about the Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site.

This past April, Parks Canada said its officials were talking to the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Nattilik Heritage Centre in Gjoa Haven about "how other Inuit organizations and communities can become engaged in and benefit from this exciting project."

But Parks Canada didn't announce with any fanfare what the big picture was: the creation of the new National Historic Site.

To learn that, you'd have to read the Official Gazette of Canada and [its April 8 Order Amending the National Historic Sites of Canada](#), which registered the 10-kilometre by 10-kilometre area around the place where Franklin's ships are both thought to have sunk.

"The story of John Franklin has captured the imagination of Canadians and the HMS Erebus shipwreck is regarded as significant to the story of Canada, there is therefore a cultural benefit to Canada from protecting this important national historical site and its artifacts," the order says.

Adding the Wrecks of the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site of Canada to the National Historic Sites of Canada list provides the site with the protections afforded by the Canada National Parks Act and its regulations.

"This will provide the federal government with the authorities to prevent unauthorized access to protect the site of the shipwreck, the shipwreck itself and its artifacts, as cultural and historical resources, and to allow for the application of enforcement powers, offences and penalties under the act," the order says. This includes fines of up to \$100,000.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Steven Harper did announce that Gjoa Haven, Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq's home community, would get a Sir John Franklin centre for visitors, a development to help the community exploit the publicity generated by [the 2014 discovery of the HMS Erebus](#), one of two ships used in the British explorer's failed expedition through the Northwest Passage.

But Harper also sidestepped the information that an historic site around the wrecks of Franklin's ships already exists.

To the NIRB, Parks Canada said no Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement has yet been negotiated for such a site, although the Official Gazette says "Parks Canada will work

with local communities and designated Inuit organizations to fulfill obligations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and in the preparation of a commemorative integrity statement and management plan.”

A management plan will be completed within five years.

Earlier this month a Parks Canada project called “Underwater Archaeology and Biology Study of the Wreck of HMS Erebus” got the go-ahead, without a screening (because of its status as an historic site), but was given a set of environmental conditions to follow.

Parks Canada’s 2015 project extends over six weeks to Sept. 19 — but the study of HMS Erebus is planned as a multi-year project, 2015-2020, Parks Canada told the NIRB.

Among the Parks Canada project’s partners: the Arctic Research Foundation, bankrolled by former BlackBerry CEO Jim Balsillie, which is supplying two vessels in 2015: the Martin Bergmann and a smaller vessel.

Summer dive operations involve both scuba-diving and surface-supplied diving from small vessels anchored to blocks carefully placed around the site.

Most of the archaeological work will involve site documentation and structural recording, through photo and video, and measurements.

And an underwater robot will conduct inspections of the interior.

Parks Canada’s website on [the Mission Erebus and Terror 2015](#) also says “one research party will continue to comb Arctic waters in the ongoing search for HMS Terror.”

Additional biology work will consist of sampling of species, video and photo recording and placement of an underwater probe to record data on water conditions.

Parks Canada told the NIRB it planned to hire three Inuit for this summer’s six-week project.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674parks_canada_eyes_national_historic_site_for_downed_Franklin_sh/

Book launch on Alberta reserve highlights Indigenous clergyman’s legacy

[National News](#) | August 25, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#) |



(Saddlelake Cree Nation Chief Leonard Jackson, second from left, Melvin Steinhauer, centre, and Whitefish Lake Cree Nation Chief Brian Favel, second from right, at the book launch Aug. 14. The two Mounties are unidentified. Submitted photo.)

Brandi Morin

APTN National News

The legacy of Henry Bird Steinhauer lives on 120 years after his death.

Known as a clergyman, a teacher and role model, the story of this Ojibway man's life and accomplishments is one long waiting to be told.

Steinhauer's great-grandson, Melvin Steinhauer, 73, wrote *Shawahnekizhek-Henry Bird Steinhauer: Child of Two Cultures* over the last 13 years on a promise he made his dad.

A book launch was held on Aug. 14 at the Whitefish First Nation in northern Alberta where Henry Steinhauer eventually settled, raised a family and influenced the small community.

"I am very glad (Melvin) did this for everybody," said Whitefish Lake First Nation Chief Brian Favel. "It's important that this is done for us because we are the next generation. If we can share the history it is important for the people to understand that we are much more than what the movies say about Indians."

The inspiration to write the book stemmed from a promise Melvin made to his father to document their family legacy, as well as a desire to share First Nation historical stories with the world.

"I wanted to share my knowledge of my great-grandfather with the rest of society," said Melvin. "The lack of Indian history prompted me to take a very serious look at what I may have to offer in terms of the history of my inheritance and the inheritance of the most precious history of my home and native land of the Whitefish Lake Reserve #128."

Steinhauer was born and raised near Lake Simcoe in northern Ontario and lived what Melvin described as an "adventurous life."

He was a well-travelled and educated man, something that was not so common for Indigenous people in those days said Melvin. He went to seminary school in New York and once even travelled to London, England. He was the first Aboriginal missionary in Alberta and was the first to translate the Bible from English into Cree. Melvin said his great-grandfather blended the two cultures together and respected Native spirituality.

Steinhauer brought much more than just the word of God to the people of Whitefish and the nearby Saddlelake First Nation. Along with encouraging moral living he preached the virtues of hard work and brought modern education, as well as agriculture and gardening skills to the community said Melvin.

“The determination and commitment of Rev. Henry Bird Steinhauer proves that no matter what you are or who you are, you can succeed in your endeavors if you work hard for it, and never give up,” said Melvin.

The author also stressed the importance of First Nation people telling their stories in written format. And that First Nations are a people who contributed to the development of Canada and Alberta which is something that isn’t often acknowledged.

“I want the whole world to know that there are no savages, warriors with feathers and war bonnets – that people were misled by the Hollywood movies to believe the misconception of what Indians are. ... First Nation peoples do want more history books about Indians so that the society of majority will understand what are Indians or who they are,” said Melvin.

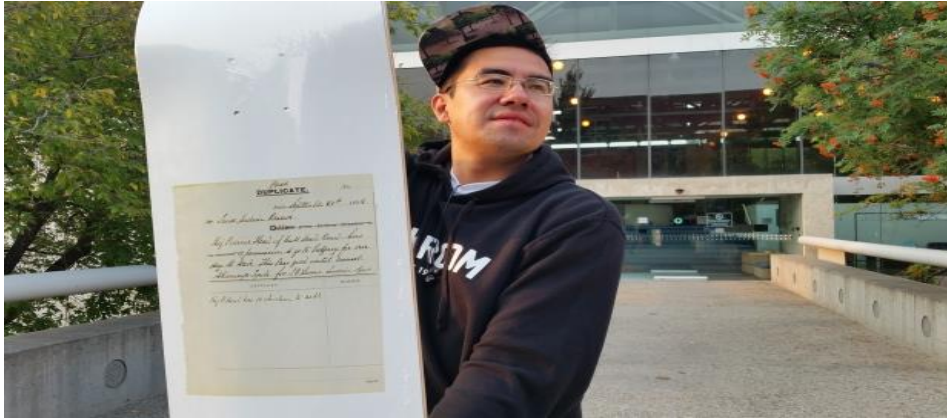
The book is available for purchase at Whitefish Lake. For more information contact steinhauer.melvin@gmail.com.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/08/25/book-launch-on-alberta-reserve-highlights-indigenous-clergymans-legacy/>

First Nations skateboarder educates people on colonialism in Canada

Michael Langan sparks conversations about Canadian history with his board

By Nichole Huck CBC, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 25, 2015 10:10 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 25, 2015 10:10 AM CT



Michael Langan founder of Colonialism Skateboards in Regina holds his first board design highlighting Canada's colonial policies towards Aboriginal people. (Nichole Huck CBC)

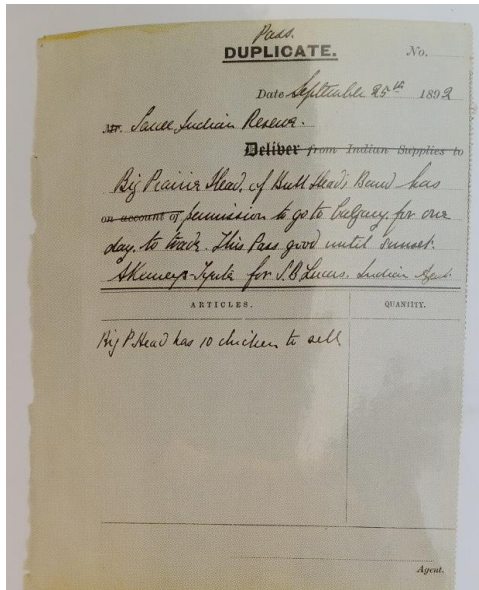
When Michael Langan was 18 years old he landed his first kickflip on his skateboard outside the CBC building in Regina. Fourteen years later he stands outside that same building holding a skateboard that he hopes will be a powerful tool in educating young skaters about one of the darkest times in Canada's history.

Langan started Colonialism Skateboards as a way of educating people on the shared history and culture of Aboriginal people in Canada. An avid skateboarder himself, he felt the skateboard community would be receptive.

"Skateboarders are really accepting of one another with their differences. You'll go to a skate park and there will be a super poor kid and some kid driving up in an Audi and they'll hang out. They'll skate together and they'll talk and they'll just accept one another," explained Langan.

The board's graphic highlights one example of colonialism, the Pass and Permit system. Langan explained that the system was used in Western Canada as a way of controlling Aboriginal people's movement and economic activity. Aboriginal people needed a permit to sell goods, to leave the reserve, to visit children in Residential Schools and visit families in neighbouring communities — something Langan said destroyed families.

Langan who is of Cree and Saulteaux descent, grew up on the Cote First Nation near Kamsack, Saskatchewan, but the inspiration for his board came from the Glenbow Museum Archives in Calgary. He found one image that he said is very powerful and stuck with him. The image is an actual permit written by an Indian Agent from Treaty 7 Territory.



The image on the board is a copy of an actual permit written by an Indian Agent on September 25, 1892 (Nichole Huck CBC)

The document granted Big Prairie Head of Sarcee Indian Reserve permission to leave his reserve and sell livestock for one day. If he had not returned to the reserve before the end of the day, or if he sold more chickens than approved, he could face up to three months in prison or \$500 in fines.

"It's a really, really deep dark history in Canada and it's been hidden in Canada for a reason," said Langan in an interview with CBC morning show host Stefani Langenegger.

Bringing positive from a negative

Langan hopes the board will spark conversations at the skate park. Conversations he said may be uncomfortable or awkward at times, but will ultimately expose a whole new group to some of the ugly chapters in Canada's past.

Langan said he's been contacted by a teacher in B.C. who wants to use the skateboard in his classroom to connect with his students and get them talking about the legacy of such policies.

"The Indian Act is still restricting Aboriginal people today," said Langan. The Colonialism Facebook page says the Pass and Permit system is one example of how the oppression of Aboriginal people then contributes to inequality and strained relations now.

Colonialism Skateboards are currently for sale in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg, but Langan says the response has been overwhelming and he plans to create more boards to highlight other aspects of Canada's colonial policies that haven't garnered as much attention as he says they deserve.

Books that inspired Langan's Colonialism Skateboards

- Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life by James Daschuk
- Children of the Broken Treaty: Canada's Lost Promise and One Girl's Dream by Charlie Angus

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/first-nations-skateboarder-educates-people-on-colonialism-in-canada-1.3203088>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Iqaluit film crew's Facebook post raises cultural concerns

Post sought an Inuit family to 'cut up and eat a seal in front of a few out-of-towners'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 24, 2015 8:06 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 24, 2015 8:06 AM CT



A community seal meat feast, held in Iqaluit for locals in June of this year, is pictured. A recent Facebook post from the crew of 'Iqaluit: the Movie' asking for a local family to butcher a seal in front of the film's out-of-town crew has drawn ire for being culturally insensitive. (Kieran Oudshoorn/CBC)

A recent Facebook post from the makers of a feature film being shot in Iqaluit is raising concerns about how non-Inuit should engage with Inuit culture.

Iqaluit: the Movie, a film directed by Canadian Benoit Pilon and starring Natar Ungalaaq, known for his starring role in *Atanarjuat: the Fast Runner*, is currently in production in Nunavut's capital.

On Tuesday, Aug. 18, Pascale Arpin, a crew member for the movie, posted to a popular community message board, seeking a local family to cut up and eat a seal in front of out-of-town crew members to ensure authenticity in the film.

"This may sound crazy but it's not a joke: looking for a family who is willing to cut up and eat a seal in front of a few out-of-towners," read Arpin's post, which went on to specify that the family would not be filmed and would get to keep the seal.



Arpin's post, which called for a 'family to cut up and eat a seal in front of a few out-of-towners.' (Facebook)

'Treated like a side show exhibition'

Leesee Papatsie, who lives in Iqaluit, said that while she's happy the crew is attempting to learn about authentic Inuit culture, there are better ways to do so than engaging in the awkward optics of watching Inuit eat.

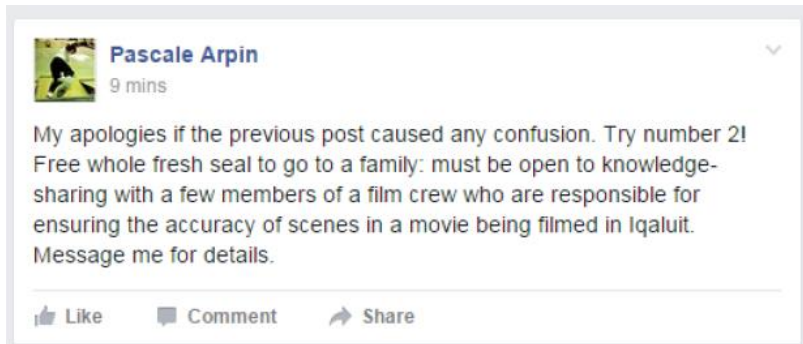
"They want to learn, that's great. But if they want to be experts, I would say let them hire an Inuit elder, and consult with [him/her]," she said.

The post also raised concerns from Daniel Justice, who chairs the First Nations and Indigenous Studies program at the University of British Columbia. According to Justice, outsiders have long had an interest in indigenous culture, but that interest can often cross the line into exploitation.

"Indigenous communities and indigenous lives are treated like they are a side show exhibition, or a zoo exhibit," said Justice, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

"It's easy for outsiders to presume a virtuous intent and often times they do, they behave in ways they see as being appropriate because it wouldn't upset or bother them... and just because it doesn't bother them doesn't mean it's not an issue."

For her part, Arpin, who's also an Iqaluit resident, says she's sad that some people misunderstood her Facebook post. She later reposted her call for a family, adding more details about what was expected and why.



Arpin's second post, in which she explained more details surrounding her request for a family to share knowledge with the film's crew. (Facebook)

"As someone who has lived here for now for five years, sometimes I feel like it's more exotifying to have to sugar coat or act like people won't understand," she said. "This is qablunaaq [non-Inuit] who want to see how natsiminiq [seal] is eaten, and that's what it is. It was intended as a learning opportunity."

Arpin also added that the crew was successful in finding a family to demonstrate how to authentically prepare seal.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/iqaluit-film-crew-s-facebook-post-raises-cultural-concerns-1.3201441>

First Nations chief sees positive reaction to racist Kijiji ad

Interim FSIN chief Kimberly Jonathan says the response has been 'heartwarming'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 25, 2015 6:48 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 25, 2015 6:48 PM CT



Interim chief of the FSIN, Kimberly Jonathan, says she is heartened to see the support against racism that has emerged after a racist ad was taken down off Kijiji. (CBC)

The interim chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), Kimberly Jonathan, sees a silver lining in the overwhelming reaction to a racist ad: an outpouring of support against racism.

A recent ad for a three-bedroom home in Prince Albert on Kijiji said "no natives please" and "will not consider aboriginals".

It also said those receiving social assistance and stay-at-home moms would not be considered.

"We face this and it's reality out there," said Jonathan. "A lot of times we just say, 'Well we're not going to say anything because where will my complaint go?'"

Kijiji pulled the ad after a complaint. And there has been a torrent of feedback denouncing the ad.

"If you look at the post and look at the social media, the comments ongoing, people are saying, our society is saying, 'This is not OK.'"

Jonathan said the reaction has been "heartwarming."

"There may be a turning point in Saskatchewan where racism is not acceptable."

'Blatant discrimination'

David Arnot, the chief commissioner with Saskatchewan's Human Rights Commission, said this ad is definitely against the province's human rights code.

"Without any question, it's obvious, blatant discrimination," he said.

Fundamentally when a landlord offers a property for rent in Saskatchewan, he offers it to all members of the public, and no one can be discriminated against on any one of 15

prohibited grounds in our code. - *David Arnot, Chief Commissioner, Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission*

"Fundamentally when a landlord offers a property for rent in Saskatchewan, he offers it to all members of the public, and no one can be discriminated against on any one of 15 prohibited grounds in our code."

Those grounds include race, age and receipt of public assistance.

The rules are not the same for a roommate situation. Arnot noted that there can be some exceptions if the family lives in the same home.

Arnot said this specific situation has broader implications.

"It does relate and link directly to the Truth and Reconciliation report earlier this year," he said.

"That report is calling on dealing with prejudices and racial discrimination against aboriginal people. And this ad or this kijiji posting corroborates the need for a positive response."

But he too sees something positive in the way people have responded to the story.

"I'm heartened I guess, because I think the vast majority of people in Saskatchewan realize this type of racial discrimination is patently offensive. "

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/first-nations-chief-sees-positive-reaction-to-racist-kijiji-ad-1.3203923>

Inuit language conference wraps in Iqaluit

Task force recommends exploring roman orthography rather than syllabics

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 27, 2015 6:46 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 27, 2015 10:31 AM CT



The delegates at the two-day conference, organized by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, came from across Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. (Pauline Pemik/CBC)

A task force launched by [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national Inuit group](#), has recommended exploring roman orthography — and not Inuit syllabics — as a standard Inuit language writing system.

The recommendations from the Autausiq Inuktut Titirasiq task force come [following a major two-day summit on Inuit languages](#), which wrapped up Wednesday in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Delegates from across the four Inuit regions of Canada, as well as representatives from Greenland, and Alaska, attended the summit, which discussed findings from a series of consultations after visits to all of Canada's Inuit regions.

Though the group recommended Inuit explore the idea of standardizing their writing system using roman orthography, it also emphasized the process will take time and cannot be rushed.



Juusipi Padlayat of Salluit, Que., said he '[didn't] think there is any problem' with standardizing the Inuktut writing system into roman orthography. (Madeline Allakariallak/CBC)

There are some 60,000 Inuit in Canada, 63 per cent of whom speak their language.

Both the oral and written language varies among regions, with ITK researchers estimating there are 12 distinct dialects.

But the key difference in the written language is, while Inuit in Labrador and the western Arctic use roman orthography (the alphabet English language users are used to), Inuit in Nunavut and northern Quebec rely instead on syllabics – distinct characters originally imported by missionaries who had developed them for the Cree.

Though long discussed as a way to broaden use of the language and make learning it, and using it online, easier, a move away from syllabics was once too controversial for public discussion.

Now, as Inuit work towards strengthening their education system, and ties to one another, the idea is becoming more accepted.



A street sign in Iqaluit includes Inuit syllabics. ((CBC))

"I don't think there is any problem with that, if the majority wants to choose that," said Juusipi Padlayat, a delegate from Salluit, Nunavik. "Roman orthography, we don't have a problem with that, we only use this in Nunavik. Even if we are going to retain the use of syllabics, I think we can live with both."

Padlayat added that the final decision regarding language standardization has to be made by the people who are most affected.

Though the group's recommendations will be passed on to the National Committee on Inuit Education and submitted to delegates at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, they are not binding. It will be up to local land claim organizations, language authorities, and governments to decide how to proceed further.

[It was announced in March](#) that the Nunavut government was looking into standardizing the writing system for Inuktitut in the territory's schools using Roman orthography.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-language-conference-wraps-in-igluit-1.3205420>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Aboriginal line crew program a success

By [Ben Leeson](#), Sudbury Star

Friday, August 21, 2015 7:57:10 EDT PM



Aboriginal youth who graduated from the line crew ground support training program pose for a group photo following a ceremony at Cambrian College on Friday. Ben Leeson/The Sudbury Star/Postmedia Network

Jericho Pettifer started the line crew support program by dipping his toe in the water, but ended up immersing himself completely.

"It was way beyond what I expected," Pettifer said. "We actually got to do work. It almost felt like you were on the job site some days, so it helped us progress faster."

The Sudburian was one of 13 young aboriginal adults to receive their training certificates Friday morning in a graduation ceremony at Cambrian College, where they were recognized before launching entry-level careers in the power line and construction industries.

"It was a great experience, all in all," Pettifer said. "There were some dry weeks, but others, when we were outside, we all had a blast."

"They taught us quite a few things in a short period of time, so it was pretty good."

Graduates completed safety modules and hands-on training in job site tasks, including pole line construction, working at heights, hoisting and rigging and crane operation, in order to prepare for the job market.

The program was made possible by the Ontario Government Youth Skills Connections Program, as part of the Ontario Youth Job Strategy, as well as Gezhtoojig Employment and Training, in partnership with the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association and Cambrian College.

Ron Sarazin is special projects co-ordinator at Gezhtoojig, which provided funding to start the program.

"Those modules they get are transferable, not just for the utility sector, but also in the construction sector," Sarazin said. "These guys can now go and work wherever and the employers are getting a job-ready client who is safety-conscious, understands working as a team, understands the needs of the industry and being at work. That's one of the big things – being somewhere, being accountable.

"At the beginning of the program, a lot of these guys come in, they test the waters, and by the end of the program, they're like a cohesive unit. It's almost like a hockey team, is what I say. They're a team now and they work in a team environment, so they understand about being to work and being ready – don't be stragglers, because you're messing with the crew."

His office funded a pilot project for the program in 2013, partnering with the IHSA and using Cambrian's facilities from its two-year power line technician program.

When the initial pilot was successful, the province provided funding for two years.

"This is more entry-level training, but it's also an extremely valuable program for anyone wanting to get into an apprenticeship," Sarazin said.

Six graduates are currently working as apprentices, while several others are working in the industry.

"I've got 80% working in the industry," Sarazin said. "I've got an employer in Cambridge who, every time we graduate, he wants all their resumes. They're a really good partner and they see the value of this training."

"It has been a great success, good positive feedback," added Greg Williamson, vice-president of high-risk activity training and operations at IHSA. "Employers who have found out about the program and engaged the individuals speak very highly of their success in the field, their qualifications and the training they have had. We have made the individual very marketable. Employers would normally put individuals through that training, but these individuals already have it, so their resumes are very comprehensive and they're basically ready to go to work."

Additional participants aged 18 to 29 may apply for the next intake in the free 15-week program, which will run Aug. 24 to Dec. 4.

For further information, email Sarazin at rons@gezhtoojig.ca.

"We're not just limiting it to aboriginal people in Sudbury," Sarazin said. "We're opening it up all across Ontario; we have a guy from Saskatchewan coming for the next one."

He also plans to open future training programs to participants of all ages.

Direct Link: <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2015/08/21/aboriginal-line-crew-program-a-success>

Aboriginal Politics

Mulcair distances himself from Selinger, tackles aboriginal issues

By [Lara Schroeder](#) Web Producer Global News, August 21, 2015 12:03 pm



WINNIPEG – Federal NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair carefully drew a distinction between his party and Manitoba's NDP government on Winnipeg's *Morning News* Friday.

Mulcair also talked about aboriginal issues and his party's childcare plan in the live interview.

Mulcair didn't answer a question about why Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger wasn't at the big NDP rally Thursday in Winnipeg, simply stating he saw the provincial NDP leader afterward.

"Across the country, we're concentrated on bringing our message forward," he said, emphasizing the word *our*.

"Greg and his government have done an amazing job, for example, of keeping unemployment very low, working on issues like social housing," Mulcair said. "They've

got a track record but of course, federally and provincially we're working on different emphasis, but I'm going to work with the provinces no matter what their political stripe."

Mulcair also promised to launch an inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

"Can you imagine if 1,200 women had been murdered or gone missing in Ottawa? You think we'd have to be begging for an inquiry to find out what the problem is?" he said. "Within 100 days of forming government, we will launch just such an inquiry."

Mulcair also promised federal funding for an all-weather road to Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2178333/mulcair-distances-himself-from-selinger-tackles-aboriginal-issues/>

Cuthand: First Nations pursue specific issues in election

By Doug Cuthand, The Starphoenix August 21, 2015



Doug Cuthand

As usual, the federal election issues in Indian Country are different from those in mainstream Canada. It only makes sense that if you have different priorities, you will want a different response from politicians who want to form the next federal government.

The Harper government's priorities of income splitting and fear of terrorists don't mean a whole lot on First Nations. However, the anti-terrorism Bill C-51 strikes fear in many First Nations people because it holds the potential to be used against us should we stand up for our rights and protection of our land.

First Nations occupy a special place in Confederation because of the treaties and aboriginal rights, and their protected status in the Constitution. First Nations are the only group in Canada to whom the federal government has a specific obligation. The British

North America Act states that the government is responsible for "Indians and lands reserved for Indians."

Ottawa funds social services, education, infrastructure and all other programs and services on First Nations. We are the one group that has the most at stake in this or any other federal election. The issue of funding for First Nations education, social services and infrastructure is emerging as the key issue in Indian Country.

Under previous funding arrangements, beginning with the Liberals in the 1990s, a funding increase cap of two per cent was placed on First Nations budgets.

The cap has remained in place since then, despite the increase in population and inflation outpacing the two per cent cap.

As a result, the funding for First Nations education is lower by about \$4,000 per student on reserves than for students elsewhere funded by provincial governments. Also child and family services on First Nations are about 60 per cent the amount that provinces pay. This funding gap has been a source of concern not only from a shortfall in funding but the outright discriminatory image that it creates. The ill-fated Kelowna Accord that was agreed upon by aboriginal leaders, Paul Martin's federal government and the provinces was intended as a catch up to address the negative effects of the two per cent cap.

However, Stephen Harper's government trashed the accord, and what has followed is a bleak decade of cutbacks and growing funding gaps.

In Indian Country, education and social services are considered statutory programs under the terms of the treaties. The treaties and the treaty negotiations are clear that the government would provide these on an ongoing basis.

The federal Liberal and NDP leaders attended the annual meeting of the Assembly of First Nations this summer, with the Conservatives conspicuously absent. Prime Minister Harper was not available and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt's office sent a message saying he was in New Brunswick "attending important events."

The opposition parties have pledged support for the First Nations. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's recent visit to northern Saskatchewan saw him roll out his party's promise to fund First Nations education to the tune of \$2.6 billion over four years, with another \$500 million for infrastructure over that term.

His promise compares with the Conservatives' proposal to commit \$1 billion over five years and \$500 million for infrastructure over seven years. The Conservatives' commitment was contingent on the passage of their First Nations Education Act. However, this was not acceptable to First Nations leaders because of its colonial construct that left all the control in the hands of the minister.

It's not clear if the Liberals will bring forward an education act, but Trudeau has committed to removing the funding increase cap that has been an impediment to education and social programming. The NDP has not provided a dollar figure for its commitments, but leader Thomas Mulcair has committed to chair a cabinet committee to ensure that government decisions respect treaty rights.

Funding for social programs is also an important factor in this election. According to the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, funding for child welfare is about 60 per cent that for off-reserve funding. The organization and its executive director Cindy Blackstock have waged an eight-year battle to have the courts and the Human Rights Tribunal rule on the injustice of this funding shortfall.

Aboriginal Affairs officials have spied on Blackstock and harassed her to the point that she was awarded \$20,000 for damages by the Human Rights Tribunal, which has yet to rule on the question of underfunding of social programs. The place of First Nations in Canada is unique, and so are our issues in the coming election.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Cuthand+First+Nations+pursue+specific+issues+election/11306650/story.html>

Metis leaders ask members to watch election season closely

[Roger Klein](#), Reporter/Videographer, Georgian Bay Bureau, CTV News Barrie

Published Saturday, August 22, 2015 6:42PM EDT

Metis leaders are asking their members to pay close attention to the issues in two upcoming elections in the region.

About 400 delegates from Metis communities across the province gathered in Midland on Saturday for the annual General Assembly of the Metis Nation of Ontario. The delegates are here to get an update on the issues facing Metis people from across the country.

Greg Garratt says he is one of many Metis families, who have deep roots in north Simcoe County.



"The Lalondes, the Secords, the Devalles, the Charleboises, the Brunelles; there are just so many of them."

President Gary Lipinski focused on the status of land treaty negotiations, Metis economic development, program funding and why the Metis community should stand up and be counted in upcoming elections.

"Pay very close attention to what the parties are saying, but even more important to what they are not saying."

The Metis vote could play a key role in the Simcoe North byelection and in the federal election because of the size of the Metis population. According to Statistics Canada, more than 4,000 Metis live in the riding. Across the country more than 450,000 Canadians self-identify as Metis.

"We will put in our newspaper, which goes to every Metis citizen across the province, about the responses we get from the parties, which will be based on the feedback we get from those letters inviting us to meet leaders or senior party members about how it is that we will work together if they form the next government."

Ontario's Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown attended the meeting, along with conservative MP Bruce Stanton. Ontario's Minister of Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer was also on hand before heading out to campaign with Liberal candidate Fred Larsen. The minister says the province and the MNO have a history of working well together.

"So when we have that solid, foundational relationship in place other good things flow from that."

Garratt says if the elections are a close race, the Metis vote could tip the polls one way or another.

The annual general assembly will continue on Sunday, where it will be focusing on more cultural events.

Direct Link: <http://barrie.ctvnews.ca/metis-leaders-ask-members-to-watch-election-season-closely-1.2529059>

New rules make it harder for marginalized to vote, advocates say

[Katie DeRosa](#) / Times Colonist

August 23, 2015 06:00 AM



Don Evans, executive director of Our Place: "The people who are going to be affected the most are the people who are not connected to the system. Whenever you create more barriers for marginalized populations, you're moving in the wrong direction." Photograph By DARREN STONE, Times Colonist

Advocates for seniors, the homeless, First Nations and students in Victoria worry that changes to voting requirements will make it harder to vote in October's federal election, pushing an already marginalized population further to the sidelines.

Under the electoral reforms passed by the Conservatives last year, dubbed the Fair Elections Act, voter-information cards can no longer be used as a piece of identification.

In the 2011 federal election, 400,000 Canadians used these cards to identify themselves at a polling station. Another 120,000 had someone, such as a neighbour or family member, vouch for their identity — a process that has also changed.

A person can still swear an oath to attest to the residence of a voter (as long as the voter has two pieces of ID with his or her name on it), but the person must be registered in the same polling division and can attest for only one voter.

Don Evans, executive director at Our Place drop-in shelter, said that means shelter staff won't be able to vouch for several people.

"In the past, our staff have been able to vouch for the people who use our service, people we're connected with and who we know," Evans said. "We've lost that ability."

Evans said those who live on the street frequently lose their ID or have their bags stolen.

“The people who are going to be affected the most are the people who are not connected to the system,” he said. “Whenever you create more barriers for marginalized populations, you’re moving in the wrong direction.”

Our Place plans to host an ID clinic in September in partnership with the Coalition to End Homelessness. Evans hopes the Victoria riding candidates will visit Our Place to talk about social welfare issues, and he’s also pushing for a polling station inside the drop-in centre.

Someone who has identification that does not have his or her address on it can also show a letter of confirmation of residence, which can be obtained from a student residence, seniors’ residence, homeless shelter or a First Nations band.

Kenya Rogers, director of external relations with the University of Victoria Students’ Society, said the group will be setting up tables on campus and at community events such as the Rifflandia music festival to make sure students have all the information they need to vote.

“We definitely feel like the adjustments [in] the Fair Elections Act are overly restrictive and it hinders the democratic process of the election,” Rogers said. “We’re trying to bring people into the election to make them feel invested in the decision they’re making.”

Caitlin Mangiacasale-Ashford, a second-year student at Vancouver Island University, made sure she changed the address on her B.C. driver’s licence from her Victoria family home to her Nanaimo residence. But she said she has talked with other students who haven’t changed their address and are scrambling to find a utility bill or piece of mail that confirms their address.

“It seems ridiculous for something that’s so fundamental to being Canadian for students to have to go through so much extra effort,” she said.

“They don’t want to go through all those hurdles on top of the school work they have to do.”

Mangiacasale-Ashford also volunteers at the Victoria Brain Injury Society and has had clients come in asking how they can vote if they don’t have a driver’s licence.

Shelley Readman, an advocate for seniors and the disabled, said there has been a lot of confusion around the new voting rules.

Readman said seniors who don’t have a driver’s licence can sign up for a B.C. identification card, which costs \$15, or for a B.C. Services Card as a replacement for their care card.

“It is something that seniors have to start doing now in order to be prepared for the Oct. 19 election,” she said.

Readman said an 87-year-old woman from a remote part of Vancouver Island was in tears when she learned the voter information card could not be used to verify her address.

“In her life, she’s never missed a vote,” Readman said.

The woman plans to get special transportation to a Service B.C. office so she can get a B.C. ID card.

Readman pointed out that in the 2011 federal election, Canadians ages 65 to 74 had a voter turnout of 71 per cent, well above the Canadian average of 61 per cent.

“So why would we want to compromise the voter that loyally comes out to vote?” Readman asked. “What a discredit to our judicial system and to these seniors who want to have a voice.”

Jack Traplin, the First Nations Student Association director on the Camosun College student society board, said First Nations members who live on reserves face obstacles of not having ID with their address on it.

First Nations status cards, for instance, are government-issued photo ID, but have no address.

Pierre Poilievre, minister of democratic reform, justified the changes by pointing to the threat of voter fraud, even though a report by elections expert Harry Neufeld found little evidence of voter fraud and recommended voter-information cards be used more widely. Poilievre’s office did not return calls for comment this past week.

Neufeld has called the changes “disenfranchising” and “unnecessarily onerous” and warned in an affidavit to the Ontario Superior Court that the changes could result in tens of thousands of Canadians being turned away from the polls because they can’t meet the new identification requirements. Particularly vulnerable, he said, are First Nations groups, seniors in care homes, students and the homeless.

The Canadian Federation of Students and the Council of Canadians asked the courts for an injunction on the Fair Elections Act, arguing it’s unconstitutional.

The Ontario Superior Court ruled against the injunction last month.

“There’s a very obvious concerted effort on the part of the Conservative government to suppress a certain type of voter and those are the voters who have already had a lot of difficulties accessing and navigating the democratic and electoral process,” Bilan Arte, national chairwoman for the Canadian Federation of Students, told the Times Colonist.

“We want to make it loud and clear coast to coast that students will not be left behind in this election.”

For more information on voting, go to elections.ca

What the Victoria riding candidates have to say about the voting changes

Murray Rankin, NDP

Rankin said he doesn't think a good job has been done of informing Canadians about the new rules, so he worries people will show up on voting day with their voter-information cards and be turned away.

"That's why I voted against the so-called Fair Elections Act. It has the effect of suppressing the vote at time when we need more people to vote," Rankin said. "People should ask themselves why the Conservatives rammed through this bill which makes it more difficult for the marginalized in our community to exercise their democratic right."

Rankin encourages people to make sure they're registered well in advance. Advanced voting takes place between Oct. 9 and Oct. 12.

John Rizzuti, Conservative Party

Rizzuti was not available for an interview.

Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party

Roberts said volunteers are busy going door to door, checking if people are on the voters' list.

The Green Party has reached out to non-partisan voter advocacy groups Vic Votes and Vote Ready about hosting voter ID workshops.

Roberts wants to see the Victoria riding achieve the highest voter turnout in the country.

"We're not going to allow tinkering with the Elections Act to defeat us," Roberts said. "We have to make the effort in this campaign that people aren't disenfranchised."

Cheryl Thomas, Liberal Party

Thomas said her office has been getting many calls from people with questions about the new voting requirements.

"There's a lot of rumours flying around so people are concerned," she said.

She said her staff is reminding students that they can vote in their hometown riding by mailing in a ballot.

Anyone who has made up their mind on who to vote for can go to the returning office at 722 Johnson St. and cast a special ballot right now.

“Deal with all of this ahead of time so you’re not shut out on elections day,” she said.

THREE WAYS TO PROVE YOUR IDENTITY AND ADDRESS

In the Oct. 19 election, your voter identification card cannot be used as a piece of ID. There are three ways to prove your identity and address:

1: Show one piece of ID

The piece should have your photo, name and current address on it.

- Driver’s licence
- Provincial or territorial ID card
- Any other government card that has your photo, name and current address on it

2: Show two pieces of ID

At least one piece must have your current address on it. There are dozens of items that can be used, including:

- health card
- Canadian passport
- birth certificate
- certificate of Canadian citizenship
- citizenship card
- social insurance number card
- Indian status card, band membership card, Métis card
- Canadian Forces identity card
- Veterans Affairs health card
- old age security card
- hospital or medical clinic card
- label on a prescription container
- credit or debit card
- student identity card
- public transportation card
- library card
- utility bill
- bank, credit union or credit card statement
- personal cheque
- income tax assessment
- residential lease

3:Take an oath

If your ID does not have your current address, you can take an oath. Show two pieces of ID with your name and have someone who knows you attest to your address. This person must show proof of identity and address, be registered in the same polling division and attest for only one person.

For more information on voting, go to elections.ca.

Source: Elections Canada

FAIR ELECTIONS ACT

The Fair Elections Act, Bill C-23, was virtually universally panned by electoral experts when it was first introduced. The Harper government eventually modified or removed some of the most contentious provisions — including backing down on plans to eliminate vouching, muzzle the chief electoral officer and create a loophole that would allow rich, established parties to spend millions more during election campaigns.

HOW THEY VOTED

The Fair Elections Act passed by a vote of 146 to 123 on May 13, 2014. All but one of the 146 votes in favour came from the Conservatives — the other one came from Independent Dean Del Mastro, a former Conservative MP convicted on three counts of breaking the Elections Act.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/new-rules-make-it-harder-for-marginalized-to-vote-advocates-say-1.2038451#sthash.Llr3EG6x.dpuf>

Fair Elections Act changes create hurdles for vulnerable voter groups

Critics say the prohibition of voter information cards and vouching could lower voter turnout among students, the homeless and First Nations.



Bilan Arte is the national chair person of the Canadian Federation of Students and says young people may lack the necessary ID that shows their identity and address.

By: Staff Torstar News Service, Published on Sat Aug 22 2015

OTTAWA—The marathon election campaign will be a test of more than voters' patience and attention span.

It will be a test of the Fair Elections Act, the controversial and sweeping legislation that has introduced changes to how Canadians prove they are eligible to vote, the way elections are financed and how voting shenanigans are investigated.

It puts more money in the pockets of political parties for a longer campaign, while capping how much third parties can spend on election advertising.

To its boosters, the changes are a necessary update, motivated in part by the need to guard against voting fraud.

"I think we have a reasonable package that enables everyone to vote while protecting the integrity of the system," Pierre Poilievre, Conservative candidate and democratic reform minister, told the Star in an interview.

However, critics of the legislation fear some of the changes will leave people in some particular groups — such as students, the homeless and First Nations — unable to vote. Critics argue that many of the changes were deliberately designed to skew the advantage in favour of the Conservatives on Election Day.

"There's no question it will have an impact in the current election," said Garry Neil, executive director of the Council of Canadians.

Even Marc Mayrand, the chief electoral officer, has warned that some of the changes "will not serve Canadians well."

The so-called Fair Elections Act stirred controversy from the moment it was introduced in February 2014. At the time, Poilievre said the law would put "special interests on the sidelines and rule-breakers out of business."

But academics, students and other concerned groups came forward to warn that the changes would actually make it harder for some Canadians to cast a ballot.

For example, the law prohibits the use of the voter information card as a document that can be used as proof of residency. This has sparked concerns that some voters — notably students living away from home, seniors in long-term care homes and Aboriginals — may lack the necessary identification, which must show their address, to vote.

There have also been changes to vouching, where one voter with proper identification could vouch for the identity of another voter at the polling station. An estimated 120,000 Canadians used vouching to vote in 2011.

“We can expect that a significant proportion of them would not be able to vote under the rules proposed,” Mayrand told a parliamentary committee in March 2014.

Mayrand noted that the worry around Canadian elections wasn’t fraud, but declining turnout.

“It is essential to understand that the main challenge for our electoral democracy is not voter fraud, but voter participation,” Mayrand told MPs.

Eliminating vouching and the information card would do little to improve the integrity of the voting process but “have taken away the ability of many qualified electors to vote,” he said.

That concern is echoed by Bilan Arte, national chairwoman of the Canadian Federation of Students, who said young people may lack the necessary ID that shows their identity and address.

That’s because they can find themselves living in two or three locations over the course of a year as they go between home, school and a job.

“The proof of address is particularly a challenge for young people,” Arte said.

In a pilot project in the last election, some 400,000 voters used the voter information card as valid ID. “It’s a very significant piece of ID that is utilized by a lot of Canadians, notably young people,” she told the Star.

Removing the information card as a valid form of ID will make it “significantly more difficult . . . for young people and for those other demographics to be able to participate in the electoral process,” she said.

“The arguments that the government is making is really just smoke and mirrors for an agenda that is about suppressing the votes of young people,” Arte said.

Arte said this is especially worrisome at a time when overall voter turnout is declining — it was 61 per cent in the 2011 election — and is even worse among younger voters.

The students federation and the Council of Canadians went to court seeking an injunction on two key elements of the act — disallowing the use of the voter information card as proof of identification to vote and the removal of vouching.

The legal bid failed but the applicants say they intend to continue their court challenge of the law after the election.

Neil, of the Council of Canadians, said that evidence produced at the injunction hearing suggested that tens of thousands of Canadians could be barred from voting because of the changes introduced by the act.

The groups most vulnerable are youth, First Nations, marginalized people like the homeless and seniors, he said. With the exception of seniors, the others are “far more likely to vote non-Conservative,” he said.

“It is the government of the day, with a majority, which is trying to write election rules that are going to favour that party and their candidates. There’s no question about it,” Neil said.

Neil is also concerned that the new legislation restricts the ability of Elections Canada and the chief electoral officer to speak out on election issues, either to encourage turnout or alert voters to potential troubles, like the misdirecting robocalls of the 2011 vote.

Poilievre downplayed the concerns and said he has no worries that a voter will be left unable to cast a ballot in the coming vote.

“I’m not troubled. I haven’t met anybody who says they’re going to have a problem voting. I’m pretty confident that everybody has some shred of paper with their name on it,” he said.

A driver’s licence alone will suffice. For those lacking a licence, there are more than 40 other possible ways to prove ID — a voter would have to show two pieces of accepted ID and one must show his or her current address.

“I think we’re in good shape,” Poilievre said.

He also defended the restrictions on Elections Canada’s ability to speak out.

“I think it’s probably in the interests of the agency to focus its communications on the nuts and bolts of voting and leave the rest to civil society and political parties. The role of Elections Canada is to inform and the role of political actors is to motivate the voter,” Poilievre said.

Arte said the student federation, which represents more than 500,000 people nationwide, is working to boost student participation in the upcoming vote by hosting candidates' debates on campuses and pressing the political parties to engage on issues important to young people, like post-secondary education.

She said the federation is working to improve awareness among students on how they can vote.

"We're doing our best to ensure that young people are getting to the polls and are able to navigate a system that has thus far been designed to make it harder for them to vote," Arte said.

Election Day by the numbers

60,000: Number of ballot boxes

20,000: Number of polling locations

120,000: Minimum number of polling station staff, with 250,000 staff retained for the election.

\$375 million: Elections Canada's budget for the election, based on 37-day campaign. The actual cost will be higher.

5 concerns about the Fair Elections Act

1. Voter information card: The law prohibits the use of the voter information card as a document that can be used as proof of residency. This has sparked concerns that some voters — notably students living away from home, seniors in long-term care homes and aboriginals — may lack the necessary ID showing their address needed to vote.
2. Vouching: Previously, one voter with proper identification could vouch for the identity of another at the polling station. The Conservatives had originally wanted to ban the practice outright but softened their stance after criticism the move would prevent some Canadians — an estimated 120,000, according to Elections Canada — from voting. Now voters will still require some ID to prove their identity but can have another elector vouch for their address.
3. Advance polls: Canadians will have an extra day to vote in advance polls. The act sets out four advance polling days — 10, nine, eight and seven days in advance of Election Day. That means Canadians can vote on Thanksgiving weekend.
4. Elections Canada: Critics say the law limits what the independent agency can publicly say about elections, such as efforts to encourage voter turnout. In the face of criticism, the Conservatives loosened the leash a bit but the head of Elections Canada is still limited to speaking on five topics: how to become a candidate; how to get on the list of electors;

how to vote; what is needed to vote; and the services available to assist voters with disabilities.

5. Finances: The act allows political parties to spend more if campaigns go longer than 37 days, a big factor in the current 78-day campaign. That means the political parties running candidates in all 338 federal ridings could spend up to \$54.5 million, up from \$25 million allowed in a 37-day campaign. That gives an advantage to the deep-pocketed Conservatives. At the same time, the act imposes spending limits on third parties on election advertising — in this longer campaign, the third-party limits are \$439,410 and \$8,788 per riding.

Direct Link: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2015/08/23/fair-elections-act-will-bring-changes-to-election-day.html>

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami candidates on future of the national Inuit organization

'In a post land claims era there are many things that ITK could do,' says ITK presidential candidate

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 25, 2015 8:48 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 25, 2015 9:12 AM CT



"When it comes to Canada's Arctic the one thing that all Canadians need to know and understand is that when they consider Canada's Arctic they start thinking about Inuit Nunangat which is the Inuit homeland," says Terry Audla, the incumbent president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

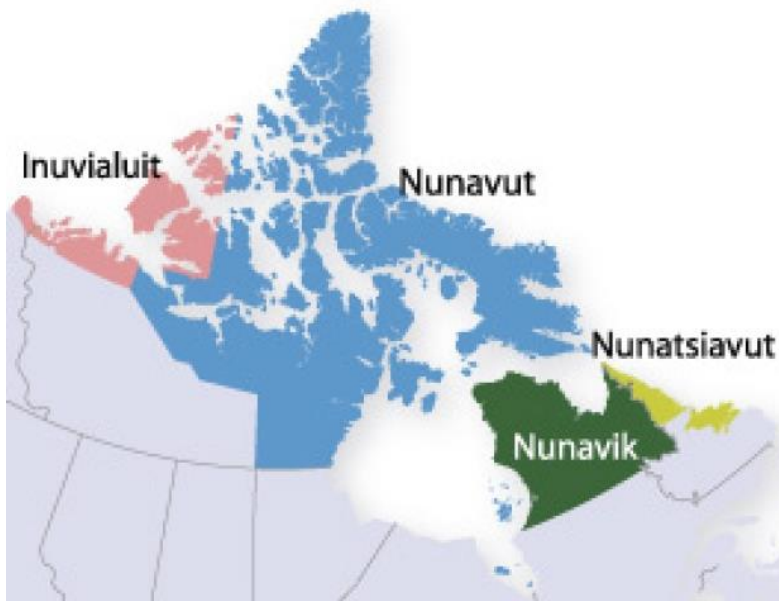
Canada's national Inuit organization is electing a new president on Sept. 17. Three people are vying for the top job, and they all want to amplify the Inuit voice on a national level.

"When it comes to Canada's Arctic, the one thing that all Canadians need to know and understand is that when they consider Canada's Arctic, they start thinking about Inuit Nunangat, which is the Inuit homeland," says Terry Audla, who was first elected in 2012 as president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's and is now seeking a second term.

"Once they start realizing that, I think everyone will be in a much better position to be able to responsibly develop the area."

Audla says that he needs more time to achieve his mandate of diversifying ITK's funding in the face of federal cuts.

However, he faces a challenge from Natan Obed, currently the director of social and cultural development for Nunavut's land claims organization Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.; as well as Jerry Komaksiutiksak, who works for the Mamisarvik Healing Centre in Ottawa.



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the voice of 55,000 Inuit living in 53 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Western Arctic, Nunavut, Nunavik in Northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in Northern Labrador. (ITK)

Money is the issue

"We have existing modern treaties and they're constitutionally protected," says Audla, "Because of these modern treaties we have the right to determine what happens here in the Arctic."

Audla says that's no small responsibility, considering that the Inuit homeland represents nearly two-fifths of Canada's land mass and 50 per cent of its coastline.

The crisis facing ITK at the moment, Audla says, is a lack of funding that has made the organization scale back its staffing and operations.

"The one thing that Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami has never done is take advantage of charitable status," he says, "and I feel that's a huge potential."

A post-land claims era

Obed, the youngest of the three ITK presidential candidates, says the future of the organization rests in expanding its mandate.

"In a post-land claims era there are many things that ITK could do," says Obed, including exploring the possibility of delivering services, now that the organization is not preoccupied with land claims issues.



"We have to imagine ITK as not just advocating for Inuit rights to non-Inuit, but ITK is a place where Inuit should be thinking about how to connect from Arctic to Arctic," says Ntan Obed. (John Van Dusen/CBC)

"We have to imagine ITK as not just advocating for Inuit rights to non-Inuit. ITK is a place where Inuit should be thinking about how to connect from Arctic to Arctic," says Obed, "We should be thinking about things that bring us together, that have nothing to do with fighting for social justice, or fighting for economic development."

Obed says he has always had a passion for social and cultural issues, is "particularly concerned about Inuit mental health and also Inuit early childhood development."

He also mentions suicide prevention as a hot button issue, calling it the "biggest policy issue of our time."

"I, like every other Inuk in Canada, have been personally touched by the issue," says Obed.

"How bad does it have to be before we act? What do the numbers have to be?"

One election during another

As the federal election ramps up, all three challengers agree that they would like to see more Inuit issues on the national agenda.

"We need to be up front and centre, and make sure the distinction of Inuit are being looked at, and that there are going to be promises for Inuit, so the issues that we face are

being dealt with at the highest level," says Jerry Komaksiutiksak, the third candidate for the ITK presidency.

Komaksiutiksak points to mental health, high unemployment, lack of education, and food security as key issues that ITK needs to raise during the federal election.

He also says that ITK also needs to promote itself more at the community level and do more work to be a real voice for the four represented regions, a task that he says needs to be completed by a president who is fluent in both Inuktitut as well as English.

Who gets to vote?

Three representatives from each of the four land claim organizations, in addition to the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada president, will be voting on the new ITK president at this fall's annual general meeting in Cambridge Bay.

The governance model was created to make the ITK president directly accountable to the communities.

"I think it's admirable that we have communities that elect regional Inuit organizational presidents and the board of directors, and we have regional Inuit presidents that then sit on ITK," says Obed, adding that the current structure allows the board of directors to be traced back to the community level.

"I feel like the ITK president should be taking direction from the four Inuit regions because the four Inuit regional presidents take direction from the communities."

Obed says the way ITK operates is unique among aboriginal groups.

"Not many other aboriginal groups in Canada have such a clear governance model, that allows for somebody to feel like the person that sits at the table as the president of ITK could be accountable through them as long as they are able to influence their own political leadership."

Despite praising the current ITK structure, Obed says that governance models are a moving target and the ITK should be different than what it was in the 1970s when it was first created.

Almost 45 years in the making

ITK is the voice of 55,000 Inuit living in 53 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Western Arctic, Nunavut, Nunavik in Northern Quebec, and Nunatsiavut in Northern Labrador. The organization was formed almost 45 years ago as a national advocacy body to promote the interests of Inuit on environmental, social, cultural, and political issues.

The national Inuit organization was formally established in 1971 but has roots which reach back to the 1960s.

At the outset, the organization was rejected by the federal government. At the time, Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien refused to fund ITK, which was then called Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. It was after much negotiation that Chrétien relented.

Since its inception, the organization's main goals have been securing land claims for all the Inuit regions in Canada.

The Inuit of Northern Quebec came first with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the first modern comprehensive land claim in Canada, in 1975. The Inuvialuit followed, signing a land claim in 1984.

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement was signed in May 1993, which led to the creation of Nunavut in 1999. Labrador Inuit signed their own land claim in 2003, creating the Nunatsiavut government in 2005.

Today, the future of the ITK is in peril as its federal funding has been cut, minimizing the organization's ability to represent the Inuit voice.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-tapiriit-kanatami-candidates-on-future-of-the-national-inuit-organization-1.3202973>

Northern Saskatchewan riding will elect an Aboriginal candidate

[Investigates](#) | August 25, 2015 by [Todd Lamirande](#) |



Time to turn our attention to the largest riding in Saskatchewan, [Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River](#), where an Aboriginal person will be elected to go to Ottawa. That's because all three major parties are fielding Aboriginal candidates. Tomorrow we'll focus on Liberal challenger, [Lawrence Joseph](#). And take a look at [Georgina Jolibois](#), who is running for the NDP, on Thursday. As well, [Warren Koch](#) is running for the Green Party. But today, we'll start with the incumbent, Conservative [Rob Clarke](#).

He was first elected in a byelection in 2008 and was re-elected in 2008 and 2011. Clarke is a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation but grew up in Quesnel, BC. He's an 18 year veteran of the RCMP and served in several Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan. There are more details in his [biography](#) on Facebook.



Clarke is the founding member and chairman of the Conservative Aboriginal Caucus and serves on the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. One of his most notable achievements in Parliament was the successful passage of his private member's bill, C-428. He introduced it last June and the federal government passed it into law this past December. It is also known as the Indian Act Amendment and Replacement Act. It removed outdated references to residential schools in the Indian Act, returned control of publishing bylaws to First Nations, and repealed the wills and estates sections.

"I believe this is an important next step toward creating a more respectful and modern relationship between Canada and First Nations," Clarke said in a statement at the time. "I am particularly pleased with the section of this bill that will require the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to report annually to Parliament on progress made toward fully replacing the Indian Act." He promised there would be lots of consultation on any future amendments to the Indian Act. However some leaders criticized the unilateral passage of the bill itself. In particular, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Grand Chief Stewart Philip, called the bill's rapid introduction "[bizarre](#)" and done with no consultation.

Clarke is a staunch supporter of the anti-terror law, bill C-51. "(It) is designed to give our law enforcement and security agencies the tools they need to keep Canadians safe as we deal with new threats," he told the [Flin Flon Reminder in a wide-ranging Q&A](#) last March.

Aboriginal people have a huge say on who gets to represent Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River. Seventy percent of the residents are Indigenous. But in 2008, it had the

lowest voter turnout in Saskatchewan, less than half bothered to cast a ballot. It will be interesting to see if various social media campaigns to get Aboriginal people to vote in October will affect turnout here in what promises to be a close race.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/08/25/northern-saskatchewan-riding-will-elect-an-aboriginal-candidate/>

Darlene Cheechoo elected 1st woman chief of Waskaganish, Que.

Housing, job creation and social issues among new chief's priorities in Cree community

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 26, 2015 3:55 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 26, 2015 3:55 PM CT

The former head of the Quebec Cree government's investment wing was elected chief of Waskaganish Tuesday, garnering almost 80 per cent of the votes.

It's the first time Waskaganish voters have chosen a woman as chief, although women have served as chief in other Cree communities including Chisasibi, Oujé-Bougoumou and Washaw Sibi.



Darlene Cheechoo was elected chief of Waskaganish, Que., on Tuesday. (Jamie Jacob/ Facebook)

Waskaganish is a community of about 2,300 on the James Bay Coast of Quebec, about an eight hours' drive north of Val d'Or.

"I feel very honoured that the people came out in such a dramatic way to express their wish to have a female chief," Cheechoo said after her win was announced.

Cheechoo is a former chairperson of the [Board of Compensation](#), the body set up to manage funds flowing from the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and she has also served as president of CreeCo, a group of Cree-owned companies.

As the newly-elected chief, she said her priorities include housing, job creation and social issues.

She said she hopes to stimulate the economy by supporting small businesses and resource development.

"I'd like to consult the people on where they see future resource development and make sure that it falls in line with our values and our future planning, including our young people," Cheechoo said.

Cheechoo got 650 votes in Tuesday's election. Runner-up Charles J. Hester got 116 votes and Charles Esau got 53.

Greta Cheechoo, Ryan Erless, Stacy Bear, Melissa Whiskeychan and Redfern Blueboy were elected as band councillors for a four-year term.

Deputy Chief A. Thomas Hester still has two years remaining in his term.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/darlene-cheechoo-elected-1st-woman-chief-of-waskaganish-que-1.3204870>

Rock the Vote encourages First Nations to cast ballots

Thursday August 27, 2015

Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining's Tania Cameron hopes to encourage First Nations people to become registered with Elections Canada early to be eligible vote in this upcoming federal election with her Rock the Vote campaign.

In June, Cameron held a Rock the Vote event in Waushushk Onigum with the aim to assist people to find out if they are registered voters, and if not then to help them become registered voters in order to participate in the upcoming election. Cameron had concerns with certain requirements a person had to meet in order to become a registered voter and decided to learn more about the elections act.

"I've always been involved politically, and politically aware, and I think where my concerns started about registration was when the Harper government in-acted the "unfair elections act" and it made it a lot more difficult for the average citizen to get out and vote, and more tough for our First Nations people, particularly in the northern, remote

communities, for them to get out and vote,” Cameron said. “I didn’t see that as fair, so I started to research the act and looking at what Elections Canada had.”

Cameron said she began researching the act in order to understand it, and to be able to take that information and explain it in a way that everyone could understand. She created a toolkit with information on becoming a voter, which includes facts from the Assembly of First Nations on which federal ridings in Canada that the First Nations vote can potentially influence the upcoming election, Power Point presentations on voting, and registration forms.

“I did my best to create the toolkit to help people get registered to vote,” Cameron said. The toolkit is available to the public in a Dropbox file, and can also be requested from Cameron herself. The package can also be found on the Rock the Vote – Kenora Riding Facebook group that Cameron started.

“I started (Rock the Vote) on my own, and left it with the Kenora riding because that’s where I live,” she said. “I started the Facebook group and put up the information that I was able to gather, and people started linking up with me and sent Facebook requests, people from other initiatives like in Saskatchewan.”

Cameron connected with other groups across Canada who shared the same mission of spreading awareness of the election and rallying First Nations to vote, and they exchanged information, including the Power Point presentation that she had created.

“I was asked by different people if they could use my Power Point. I have two, one that is specific to Kenora and one that is a general presentation,” she said.

Cameron said that her reasons behind creating Rock the Vote was because she does not believe that the Conservative Party of Canada has First Nations issues at heart.

“All the legislations that they passed don’t actually do any good for our First Nations people,” Cameron said. “And with the upcoming elections, we need to get rid of this Conservative government. If the Conservatives are going to put hoops in front of us to try and block or act as a barrier to prevent our people from voting, then I am going to do my best to help our people maneuver their way through this election in order to get their vote in.”

Cameron said that she thinks of the Fair Elections Act as “voter suppression.”

“I think the “unfair elections act” is voter suppression. It targets First Nations people, our vulnerable, our seniors, our homeless people in urban centers, it’s just not fair at all,” she said.

The Fair Elections Act eliminated two key ways of voting, the first being vouching and the second the use of Voter’s Identification Cards. New requirements include the need for

two pieces of approved ID, something Cameron thinks will be difficult for some of those who live in First Nations communities.

“That’s my whole thing, is some people, even if it’s just the average citizen, are going to get a rude awakening when they go with their voter ID and find out they go back out to get their driver’s license or whatever they have. Some people are going to say “forget that, I tried to vote,” and they will leave and not go back to vote,” Cameron said. “Our First Nations may not have a single piece of ID, it may be a lot more difficult to find the two pieces they need to vote.”

Cameron hopes to encourage the chief and council and band management of those in the Kenora riding, a riding a lot of Nishnawbe Aski-Nation communities fall under, to help get their members registered to vote by doing registration drives, and supply a Confirmation of Residency letter that will serve as a piece of ID with Elections Canada.

“You will also need another thing with your name on it,” Cameron said. “It can be a debit card, a credit card with your name on it. Even a prescription bottle will serve as a second piece of ID.”

Cameron hopes that people at the grassroots level will start to host their own ID clinics in their communities to ensure those who wish to vote have the right pieces of ID.

“They can check online if they are registered, and they can get their ID’s photocopied and faxed to Elections Canada. That’s why I am hoping grassroots people will step up to organized that info, download the toolkit I made up. I am even willing to speak on the phone on weekends and evenings to walk them through that toolkit,” Cameron said.

Theresa Oombash of Cat Lake has taken it upon herself to hold a registration drive as well in her community, which Cameron called “incredible” and hopes more people will do the same. Cameron explained that she hopes to be able to get the information translated as well in different languages for those whose first language is not English.

She explained that there are 38 First Nations in the Kenora riding, and that while Elections Canada and that if they worked together and voted that they could potentially elect the next MP.

“I think if the First Nations decided, particularly in the Kenora riding, if they decided that they are going to get out and vote like right across the communities, I believe our communities can pick our next MP. We have that much power in our vote,” she said. “But we gotta get registered.

You can register at the polling station the day of the election, but I would rather everyone start doing it now so that we know we are on the voter’s registration list.”

Direct Link: http://www.wawataynews.ca/archive/all/2015/8/27/rock-vote-encourages-first-nations-cast-ballots_26028

First Nations voters could change Brant



Brant News

By [Brian Shypula](#)

23 hours ago

Brantford-Brant is one of 51 ridings that First Nations voters could potentially influence in the federal election, according to the Assembly of First Nations.

The AFN is calling the ridings “influential” if there is enough native population to overcome the margin of victory from the last federal election in 2011.

Conservatives hold nearly half those ridings.

Incumbent Conservative Phil McColeman won the riding in 2011 with 28,045 votes – 11,694 more than runner-up NDP candidate Marc Laferriere.

The AFN analysis shows there are 8,370 aboriginal electors in Brantford-Brant, which doesn’t cover the margin even though the riding is home to Six Nations, the largest First Nations community in Canada.

However, the number swells to 22,173 total registered native electors – enough to cover the margin – in the 2013 Indian Registry, which lists all people registered for a status card and is generally considered the more accurate gauge of potential indigenous voters.

Brantford-Brant is not an influential riding, however, if there is the same rate of voter turnout as the last federal election, which in Ontario was 45.3 per cent.

The total number of influential ridings in Canada is 15 if voter turnout is the same as in 2011. Of the 15, seven are held by Conservatives, six NDP and two Liberal.

Voter turnout is historically low in Six Nations and other First Nations communities, but some chiefs are out to change that this election.

AFN Chief Perry Bellegarde has said First Nations voters need to make themselves heard this election.

Will the call be heeded in Six Nations?

“I’m not telling them to vote,” said elected council Chief Ava Hill.

“There are two sides to this whole thing. There are people who are encouraging people to get out and vote. But at the same time we say we’re a sovereign nation. If you’re a sovereign nation why do you participate in another person’s election?” she said.

Hill said she responds to requests for information about voting but isn’t encouraging people to vote.

Amos Key Jr., executive director of the Woodland Cultural Centre, said he votes but it’s something he felt he had to keep secret, even from his own family.

“The only way we can influence change is by participating,” he said.

“I didn’t lose my creed, I didn’t lose my faith, I didn’t lose my spirit, I didn’t lose the colour of my skin when I voted in provincial and federal elections,” he said. “I’m still just as much a Mohawk as I was before I started doing that.”

Key Jr. said he feels that voting has given him a voice and confidence to organize events like last Friday’s roundtable discussion with Brantford-Brant Liberal candidate Danielle Takacs and former prime minister Paul Martin.

It was the second high-profile event in Six Nations for Takacs, who brought Liberal aboriginal affairs critic Carolyn Bennett and five Liberal candidates to the community on a fact-finding visit in March.

Clearly, Takacs would like to benefit from a surge in voting in Six Nations.

“I would love to be able to say I changed that,” she said.

Martin said he participated in last week’s event – which combined campaigning with advocacy – at the invitation of Takacs.

Key Jr. said if he is influencing Six Nations voters it’s quietly, which is how he thinks the word is spreading in the community.

Direct Link: <http://www.brantnews.com/news-story/5817077-first-nations-voters-could-change-brant/>

Cree youth council votes its chief out of office

Unprecedented non-confidence vote splits youth delegates 27 to 15

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 27, 2015 12:32 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 27, 2015 12:32 PM CT



Joshua Iserhoff speaks at Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, March 2015. In an unprecedented 27-15 vote of non-confidence, the Cree Nation Youth Council voted to Iserhoff, its chief, out of office earlier this month. (Jaime Little/CBC)

The Cree Nation Youth Council, which represents youth from all nine Cree communities in Northern Quebec, has voted to dismiss its elected Youth Grand Chief, Joshua Iserhoff.

"I believe that the allegations against me are untrue." - *Joshua Iserhoff*

In a press release today, the CNYC said the unprecedented non-confidence vote came after an in-camera session at the youth council's annual general assembly on August 16 in Waswanipi.

"I believe that the allegations against me are untrue," Joshua Iserhoff wrote in a statement released today.

Neither he nor the CNYC is commenting on the nature of the allegations.

Iserhoff said he was asked to resign and after refusing to do so, 27 of 42 delegates voted to dismiss him.



Neither Iserhoff, pictured above, nor the Cree Nation Youth Council would comment on the nature of the allegations against him, except for Iserhoff to say that he 'believes they are untrue.' (Jaime Little/CBC)

He said he accepts the council's decision and "did my best to take it in stride".

Joshua Iserhoff's four-year term was scheduled to end next spring. He [participated in a high-profile Anti-Uranium Walk](#) and was involved in bringing the [N'we Jinan music production project](#) to Cree communities.

Deputy Youth Grand Chief Alex Moses of Waswanipi will serve as Interim Youth Grand Chief until elections are held.

Another Deputy Youth Grand Chief will be chosen by the board at its next meeting, September 16 and 17, 2015 in Mistissini.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-youth-council-votes-its-chief-out-of-office-1.3206041>

Lawrence Joseph hopes a change of party will mean electoral victory

[Investigates](#) | August 26, 2015 by [Todd Lamirande](#) |



Continuing our look at the candidates running in [Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River](#), Saskatchewan, we turn to Liberal candidate [Lawrence Joseph](#). His main opponents are Conservative incumbent Rob Clarke, who was [profiled yesterday](#), [Georgina Jolibois](#) for the NDP who we'll take a closer look at tomorrow, and [Warren Koch](#) for the Greens.

Joseph is a member of the Big River First Nation and speaks Cree fluently. He certainly has a lot of political experience, having served two terms as a Prince Albert city councilor in 1991 and 1995. He spent over a decade as a Vice-Chief then Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. For more details on his personal biography go [here](#). He ran in Desnethé in 2011 and was narrowly defeated by Clarke by only 800 votes. Back then he ran for the NDP, while this time around it will be for the Liberal Party.



Joseph's explanation for changing parties is that he was a Jack Layton supporter but is disappointed with his replacement, Thomas Mulcair. "Mr. Tom Mulcair, with all due respect to him, is no Jack Layton," he told the [Prince Albert Daily Herald last December](#) when he announced he was seeking the Liberal nomination. "(Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau) takes a personal interest in what people have to say," Joseph explained. "He had the charisma and also the commitment to actually work with me and also my family and First Nations people and all the families of the north."

In an interview [published in paNOW](#), he further states that the Conservatives have failed northern Saskatchewan. "The Conservative's answer to the First Nations housing crisis is building more jails. That's not right. We need to invest in our young people and build more education. I'm excited about Justin Trudeau's leadership."

Two weeks ago Joseph found himself defending the riding against a Montreal Gazette article that depicted La Ronge, SK, as [impoverished and plagued by alcoholism](#) and which incorrectly depicted the local Indigenous people as Cree Dene. “If that Montreal Gazette reporter had spent more time in the North (and learned that there is no such thing as the ‘Dene Cree’), then he would know, as I do, that while we have challenges, we also have kind, caring people who love their families and their communities,” he said on his Facebook page on August 15th.

It will be interesting to not only see if Aboriginal people come out to vote but will they see Joseph’s change of parties as pure political opportunism. Or overlook it and put him over the top on October 19th. However, both Clarke and Joseph are running against a strong NDP candidate in Jolibois, who we’ll put in the spotlight tomorrow.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/08/26/lawrence-joseph-hopes-a-change-of-party-will-mean-electoral-victory/>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

WWF, National Geographic link up to promote Arctic’s “Last Ice Area”

"To protect it for ice-dependent species and northern communities"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, August 21, 2015 - 1:15 pm



The World Wildlife Fund-Canada and the National Geographic Society have teamed up on a drive to protect the “Last Ice Area,” the area above Canada’s High Arctic Islands and northwest Greenland where climate scientists say summer sea ice is projected to last the longest. (PHOTO BY JANE GEORGE)

The World Wildlife Fund-Canada and the National Geographic Society have teamed up on a drive to protect the High Arctic.

Its goal: to draw global awareness to what the two organizations call one of the most important parts of the Arctic — the “Last Ice Area” — the area above Canada’s High Arctic Islands and northwest Greenland where climate scientists say summer sea ice is projected to last the longest.

Since satellite monitoring began in the late 1970s, Arctic summer sea ice extent has been shrinking at a rate of about 12 per cent per decade, according to a joint Aug. 20 news release.

“If this trend continues, the summer sea ice could disappear almost completely within a generation,” the news release said.

WWF-Canada underlined its support for research and work with Inuit and local and national governments to determine how best to manage this part of the Arctic.

“Highlighting the ‘Last Ice Area’ and the need to protect it for ice-dependent species and northern communities has been a top priority of our Arctic work for several years,” said WWF-Canada President and CEO David Miller. “We couldn’t have asked for a better partner to help steer the public eye northward to this important region.”

The National Geographic Pristine Seas project will work with WWF-Canada to bring attention to the threats facing the summer sea ice and document “how the Inuit culture is connected to the area and its extraordinary wildlife.”

“We came close to Arctic wildlife and filmed them like never before while also documenting the last traditional hunting by the Inuit,” said National Geographic’s Enric Sala about a recent trip to northern Baffin Island.

“But as the sea ice retreats, what we saw will likely change. We will explore these changes and ultimately how they will impact the local people and the critical environment upon which they rely.”

In 2013, the WWF hosted a [two-day “Last Ice Area” workshop in Iqaluit](#) to promote its “Last Ice Area” conservation plan for High Arctic region.

[That came after a move in 2011 by Coca-Cola Canada](#), which committed \$2 million over five years to WWF’s Last Ice Area plan, through its sales of white, polar-bear decorated Coke cans.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674wwf_national_geographic_link_up_to_promote_arctics_last_ice_area/

This Aboriginal Community Is Launching a Solar Project in the Heart of Canada's Oil Sands

By [Hilary Beaumont](#)

August 20, 2015 | 4:30 pm

The Lubicon Lake Band in Little Buffalo, Alberta, is surrounded by fossil fuel extraction, and the province is lighting up with increasingly intense forest fires. A few years ago, the community experienced one of the largest oil spills in the province's history when 28,000 barrels of crude [leaked onto their territory](#). A month ago, another pipeline burst, [spurting 31,500 barrels of bitumen](#) onto a nearby First Nation.

Now, a community leader is making a pointed statement: building a 20.8 kilowatt Piitapan Solar Project to show that they don't have to rely on electricity generated from fossil fuels.

This week, ahead of Friday's launch, Lubicon Cree First Nation and Greenpeace member Melina Laboucan-Massimo took a break from the project's construction to talk on the phone with VICE News, pausing briefly to coordinate with the team erecting the 80 solar panels.

"It's a big system," she explained. "It will probably be one of the biggest solar installations in northern Alberta, especially in the tar sands."

The solar panels will supply electricity to the First Nation's brand new health centre, with excess feeding into the grid. "It's right in the community, so young people can see that we don't just have to generate power and electricity from fossil fuels, that we can power it from the sun."

Along with the solar project, the team plans to hold workshops for elementary and high school kids to educate them on the benefits of renewable energy.

Indigenous communities in northern Alberta used to be self-sufficient, living off the land, Laboucan-Massimo said, but now they rely on social services, and outside sources of food, water and fuel.

Lubicon Cree First Nation estimates that oil companies have extracted \$14 billion in resources from their traditional territory, but royalties go to the Alberta government — not to their community.

Laboucan-Massimo wants to create green jobs and less reliance on fossil fuels, and for her that starts with the community-owned and operated solar project.

Last summer, she began planning the solar project: "We introduced the idea of solar panels coming into the community, and people were interested in having them," she told VICE News. "You know, this is basically a demonstration of the type of technology that exists in the world now, and that we should be utilizing, instead of solely relying on extractive industries like the tar sands."

She fundraised with help from her partner's company, W Dusk Energy, a grant from BullFrog Power, and generous donations from Honor the Earth Foundation and Jane Fonda, [who attended the Toronto climate march](#) earlier this summer with Laboucan-Massimo.

"When I told her about the project, I didn't even ask her, she offered," Laboucan-Massimo said.

There was no government funding whatsoever for the project.

"There's very, very limited funding for renewables in Alberta and in Canada," she said. "There's some, but it's very limited."

The solar project organizer said there needs to be more funding for renewables projects like this one.

"I hope that by having projects like this, in the northern part of Alberta, that the Alberta government will take note of it, seeing that communities are going ahead without them, that communities really want to see this, and that they're willing to put their support and money into this."

Direct Link: <https://news.vice.com/article/this-aboriginal-community-is-launching-a-solar-project-in-the-heart-of-canadas-oil-sands>

First Nations Fight to Preserve Eagles' Nests Slated for B.C. Dam Destruction

[Konnie LeMay](#)

8/23/15

It's not enough that British Columbia wants to flood the hunting and fishing lands of several First Nations to make way for a third dam on the Peace River. Now the province apparently wants to chop down trees containing eagles' nests, too.

Treaty 8 First Nations in British Columbia, Canada are trying to halt the \$8.8 billion project BC Hydro known as the Site C Clean Energy Project, which would put a third dam on the Peace River system. In one of several court filings, the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations have called for a provincial supreme court review of the

project, which would flood about a 52-mile reservoir along the river, making it two to three times its normal width.

The British Columbia Supreme Court heard arguments in the case this past spring but has not yet ruled. Meanwhile, BC Hydro has moved ahead, clearing large forested areas for the project. The two First Nations have called for an injunction on work until court cases are concluded; BC Hydro said on August 19 that halting it would add \$500 million to the project costs, according to the [Canadian Press](#).

BC Hydro is negotiating land and payment compensations for First Nations in British Columbia and Alberta that are affected by the project. The Saulteau First Nations, for example, voted in July to accept a multimillion-dollar land transfer and lump-sum package, but divisions over the voting and whether people understood the deal could result in a new vote. As the story continues unfolding, though, two videos made this year show the commitment and the creativity of the First Nations leaders in bringing issues to light and in voicing concerns for the people and the environment.

In May, a Global News report showed West Moberly First Nations Chief Roland Willson delivering two coolers with 200 pounds of bull trout to the provincial legislature. None of the fish, taken from the Crooked River, would be safe for consumption because of mercury contamination caused by another BC Hydro reservoir project, he said. Then with the aid of a piece of candy, the First Nations Chief bluntly illustrated the effect of such contaminations on what has traditionally been a source of sustenance, reported [Global News Canada](#).

On August 7, Treaty 8 First Nations members and non-Native supporters joined to protest the project overall as well as the specific plan—scheduled to start in September—to remove trees with 28 bald eagles' nests. The nests are not currently inhabited, but eagles often return to nests every year. The company's permit for removal requires that the nests be moved or relocated between September and March. BC Hydro will install platforms intended to replace the nesting areas—but how the eagles will know what to do is anybody's guess.

“I don't know how they communicated with the eagles, how they spoke with them to make them understand that this is your new home,” noted George Desjarlais of the West Moberly First Nations.

Far more than eagle habitat is at stake. The flooding could wipe out evidence of First Nations history going back 12,000 years, *The Globe and Mail* reported last February.

“The area that is going to be flooded is significant,” archeologist Jonathan Driver told [The Globe and Mail](#). “The Peace River was a well-traveled route between the lowlands and the front ranges of the Rocky Mountains. You need to make a concerted effort to recover the knowledge of that history as much as possible—what is needed is a research strategy, and we are not approaching the destruction of that river valley in that way.”



Photo: Common Sense Canadians via YouTube

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/23/first-nations-fight-preserve-eagles-nests-slated-bc-dam-destruction-161472>

In Harm's Way: First Nations leader, activists speak out against Energy East

By

[Sabrina Bowman](#)

| August 24, 2015



Last month, the oil industry had a rather embarrassing stumble. A tar sands pipeline [had one of the largest spills ever in Canada](#), spilling over 5 million litres of tar sands sludge in Alberta. And the kicker? The pipeline, which was owned by Nexen, was only a year old. So much for so-called "[failsafe](#)" technology.

Pipelines are risky businesses, threatening our water, land, and climate, as last week's Ontario Energy Board [report](#) reiterated as well. Environmental Defence, in partnership with Toronto350.org, hosted a panel discussion in Toronto in July titled, [In Harm's Way](#), on the risks of the proposed [Energy East](#) pipeline. If built, Energy East would be the largest tar sands pipeline in North America.

Our panelists explained how Toronto residents would be affected by the [Energy East pipeline proposal](#), despite living hundreds of kilometers away from the pipeline's proposed route.

Policy analyst Erin Flanagan from Pembina Institute outlined [in sharp detail the major climate risks](#) that this pipeline would have, explaining how the project would increase Canada's carbon pollution equal to [putting 7 million new cars on the road](#). My colleague Adam Scott gave an overview of the Energy East project [and the risks it poses](#) to hundreds of communities, waterways, and ecosystems across the country. Ben Donato-Woodger shared what Toronto350.org has been doing [to build a growing movement of opposition to pipelines](#) here in Toronto, including block parties, mass mobilizations, and connecting Torontonians to the larger climate movement.

We were honoured that our final speaker was Chief Fawn Wapioke of [Iskatewizaagegan No. 39 Independent First Nation](#) near Kenora, Ontario, who joined via Skype. The massive pipeline would cut right across her community's territory. Chief Wapioke [has been firm on why she's involved in opposing Energy East](#):

"I believe in our future. I believe as an Anishinaabe Ikwe my responsibility is to ensure that there is a future for my children that are playing around here, for their children, for their great great great grandchildren. How do we do that? How do we look at things today and say, is 'it' necessary?"

The choice is clear: do we want to let oil companies have it their way and recklessly expand the tar sands or do we follow the advice of scientists and leave the bulk of climate-destroying tar sands oil in the ground?

Across Canada, from coast to coast to coast, a diverse movement of people is building who are saying no to pipelines and yes to protecting our climate. This movement includes First Nations and allies, students, workers and retired people, long-time activists and newly engaged community members and communities. We are united by our desire to halt irresponsible tar sands expansion and put Canada on the path towards a clean economy, powered by renewable energy. This movement is growing stronger and louder.

You can help! Take action today and [tell Premier Wynne Ontario should reject Energy East](#).

Direct Link: <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/environmental-defence/2015/08/harms-way-first-nations-leader-activists-speak-out-again>

Thunder Bay biologist learns lessons from indigenous people

Close links to the land lead to valuable climate change observations, says Gleb Raygorodetsky

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 23, 2015 8:00 PM ET Last Updated: Aug 23, 2015 8:00 PM ET



The Sapara people of Ecuador and the impact of climate change on their lives is being studied by a Thunder Bay biologist. (Gleb Raygorodetsky)

A biologist based in Thunder Bay has set out to learn about climate change through the eyes of the world's indigenous people.

Gleb Raygorodetsky has travelled the world for over 20 years researching traditional knowledge and customs for non-profit agencies and most recently with United Nations University.

The focus of his work over the last two years has been collecting material for a book looking at the impact the shifting climate is having on many of the world's people.

Raygorodetsky said he's passionate about learning from indigenous people because scientific research doesn't always provide the tools needed to understand our changing environment.

"Indigenous people have a spiritual connection, a direct link to the land, a time horizon we lack in science," he said.



Thunder Bay biologist Gleb Raygorodetsky is studying climate change through the lives and stories of the world's indigenous people. (Gleb Raygorodetsky)

The research Raygorodetsky is carrying out has taken him far afield to countries like Russia and Ecuador. He's documented the stories of the indigenous people who live there in a book called "Archipelago of Hope," which he hopes to publish.

More time on the land

Raygorodetsky said he received some private funding for the book, but he's now launched a fundraising campaign on Indiegogo, so he can carry out more research.

"I have some stories that are solid, but I want to go back and dig deeper, to spend more time on the land," he said.

Those stories took him to the homeland of the Altai people in Russia, the boreal landscapes where the Skolt Sami live in Finland and to the rainforest of Ecuador to meet with the Sapara people. Closer to home, Raygorodetsky spent time on the traditional territory of the Ta-o-qui-hat people in British Columbia.



A member of the Tia-o-qui-aht first nations people of British Columbia on their traditional land. (Gleb Raygorodetsky)

"They are still there"

What stood out for Raygorodetsky from his time on the land with indigenous people, was their resilience and their ability to endure so much at the hands of social change.

"They are still there. They have been able to adapt and keep a close link to the land despite all the challenges," he said.

Raygorodetsky expects his book to be published in 2016.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/thunder-bay-biologist-learns-lessons-from-indigenous-people-1.3196377>

Groups urge review board to hold hearings on Nunavut iron mine

"They are asking the people living in the Arctic to assume the burden of an increased environmental risk"

LISA GREGOIRE, August 25, 2015 - 7:01 am



The sprawling Milne Inlet port facility in July 2015, with the new shiploader that serves Baffinland's Mary River iron mine about 100 km inland. (PHOTO COURTESY BAFFINLAND)



Iron ore from the Mary River mine is currently trucked from the top of Deposit 1 of the Naluujaak pit, top left, downhill to an ore crusher. The crushed ore is trucked about 100 km down a relatively flat tote road to the port at Milne Inlet. The short spur road in this photo leads to a small storage area in bottom right. (PHOTO COURTESY BAFFINLAND IRON MINES)

If recent correspondence is any indication, the Nunavut Impact Review Board will likely be persuaded to hold public hearings to reconsider the terms and conditions of the Baffinland Mary River iron mine's current project certificate.

Five federal departments, the Government of Nunavut, two organizations and one individual have all submitted letters to the NIRB and it's nearly unanimous: amendments to [Baffinland's Phase 2 project](#) in north Baffin are significant enough to trigger full project reconsideration.

The most detailed letter comes from the Qikiqtani Inuit Association.

The QIA says the amended project proposal — which would see, among other things, more iron ore traffic down the tote road from the mine site to Milne Inlet and almost

year-round shipping near sensitive marine habitats — is a huge departure from what the company proposed in its original Phase 2 project.

“The potential for pronounced impacts on community-based traditional and subsistence activities is a serious matter which deserves an open discussion in a public forum,” says the QIA’s Aug. 19 letter.

The Baffin Inuit organization also says that the current Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreement would have to be renegotiated to reflect “year-round commercial shipping,” something that was written into the current multi-million-dollar IIBA.

Although the Phase 2 project was [rejected by the Nunavut Planning Commission](#) April 8, the minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development overruled the NPC and sent the project amendments to the NIRB for review.

The NIRB must now decide whether Nunavut Land Claims Agreement provisions under Section 12 should trigger a project certificate reconsideration for Baffinland Phase 2 and thus full public hearings on potential new terms and conditions.

The QIA certainly thinks so, and for a number of reasons, including:

- increased traffic on the tote road is “unprecedented in Arctic mining operations” and could create a significant wildlife barrier, especially for caribou whose population numbers will likely increase over the mine’s lifespan;
- increased shipping and proposed ice-breaking could significantly impact marine wildlife;
- seasonal baseline data on marine species, their migration, and habitat along the shipping route are “weak or lacking”;
- potential impacts on nearby communities especially Pond Inlet are a concern for residents due to the “the frequency and duration of shipping activities both in winter and the open water season”; and,
- increase in site infrastructure and hazardous materials will be in storage at the Milne Inlet dock facility.

The QIA also asked about intervenor funding, saying money should not be a barrier for members of the public who may want to attend any future public hearings.

Helen Gerson, the only individual to submit a letter to the NIRB, is a respected expert on narwhal social organization and behaviour.

She has concerns that Baffinland's increased shipping noise and activity will impact prime summering areas for pods of narwhal and is urging the NIRB to prevent 10 months of annual shipping in and out of Eclipse Sound, near Pond Inlet.

She also fears contamination from fuel storage tanks, hearing damage to narwhals and the potential for more invasive marine species to appear in the area due to increased shipping from Europe.

"The company, Baffinland, has taken a calculated risk; they must have known that prices of iron ore rise and fall," she writes.

"Now, because of falling iron ore prices, they are asking the people living in the Arctic to assume the burden of an increased environmental risk."

Five federal departments all weighed in on the subject but only one stopped short of saying the NLCA would trigger a Mary River reconsideration and, interestingly, that department is Aboriginal Affairs — the [department that overruled the NPC](#) to speed up the regulatory process.

A detailed and technical six-page letter says that AANDC is "unable at this time to determine whether the reasons advanced by Baffinland do or do not trigger an NCLA 12.8.2 (b) reconsideration."

When asked to comment on whether they felt that the issue had aroused "significant public concern," AANDC said that after a survey of public comments and media on the subject, "it appears Mary River Phase 2 could potentially arouse public concern."

But it suggests in order to accurately gauge that, the NIRB should hold stakeholder consultation as part of the project reconsideration.

You can read all the correspondence on this subject by going [here](#).

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674groups_tell_review_board_to_reconsider_nunavut_mining_project1/

N.W.T. aboriginal groups get 1st payments from devolution's resource revenue

Tlicho receive nearly \$1M share of revenues from mining, oil and gas

By Guy Quenneville, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 25, 2015 5:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 25, 2015 5:00 AM CT

Nine aboriginal groups in the N.W.T. are getting their first taste of devolution money this month, with one group seeing nearly \$1 million from the deal.

Under the devolution agreement, the territorial government agreed to share up to 25 per cent of the N.W.T.'s resource revenues — money collected from the profits of oil and gas and mining companies, plus other taxes.



Eddie Erasmus, grand chief of the Tlicho Government, says his government received \$912,000 from the N.W.T. government as its share of resource revenues for the fiscal year 2014-15 stemming from devolution. (CBC)

Eddie Erasmus, the grand chief of the Tlicho Government, says his government received \$912,000 from the territorial government for the fiscal year 2014-15.

He says that money went directly into the Tlicho Government's \$23-million budget and helped fund on-the-land traditional knowledge programs, the government's annual gathering, 10th anniversary celebrations for the Tlicho Agreement, and scholarships.

"We have a budget of \$22 million and now this is a million dollars on top of that," Erasmus said.

Less than expected

Erasmus said his government's share was less than initially hoped for but not surprising given economic slowdowns elsewhere in the country.

"Every year it's not going to be the same. Next year it could be better."

In February, the territorial government lowered its estimate of the N.W.T.'s total resource revenues (before payments to aboriginal groups) to \$40 million from \$60 million.

The territorial government would not confirm what its own share of 2014-15 resource revenues (after payments to aboriginal governments) actually came to. The government said the figure will be disclosed in a report this fall.

The other groups that received resource revenue payments from the government are the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Salt River First Nation, Deninu Kue First Nation, Acho Dene Koe First Nation and the K'atlodeeche First Nation.

How the money is split among the groups is determined by "population and a regional average for cost of living," according to the territorial government.

The Dehcho and Akaitcho First Nations are the only two major groups that have not signed on to the devolution deal.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/n-w-t-aboriginal-groups-get-1st-payments-from-devolution-s-resource-revenue-1.3202488>

Low water levels in Athabasca River delta affecting residents, wildlife

By [Cullen Bird](#), Today staff

Tuesday, August 25, 2015 5:45:36 MDT PM



Mikisew Cree band councillor Ronnie Campbell stands with Cree elder Archie Antoine in front of the Fletcher Channel, part of the Athabasca River delta, on Aug. 22, 2015. Both say this year's low water levels have seriously affected Fort Chipewyan residents and others who use the delta for transport. CULLEN BIRD/Fort McMurray Today/Postmedia Network.

A shallow Peace-Athabasca River Delta is causing transportation and food security issues for Fort Chipewyan residents and other river dwellers.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta, one of the world's largest inland freshwater deltas, is breaking historical records for low water levels.

Alberta Environment records from a monitoring station near Fort McMurray say the river is currently flowing at 450 cubic metres per second, compared to an average August flow of 789 cubic metres per second based on 57 years of data.

“The main reason for low flows now at this point of year is that there hasn’t been any precipitation,” said Lisa Glover, spokesperson for Alberta Environment. The Athabasca is fed by glacier and meltwater runoff by the Rocky Mountains, as well as local tributaries.

An early spring and a small snowpack means very little meltwater is sustaining is coming through the river now.

Low water levels have made travelling the river by boat treacherous, since a resident could easily smash a motor on an unseen sandbar, says Ronnie Campbell, a Mikisew Cree band councillor.

That means Fort Chipewyan residents can’t travel down the river to buy groceries from Fort McMurray, Campbell said.

“They get discouraged,” he said. “So they’re forced to buy groceries from our Northern Store, where the prices are ridiculously high.”

It also means residents can’t access or use their traditional hunting or fishing grounds, Campbell said.

The Mikisew Cree can hunt in the southern portion of Wood Buffalo National Park as part of their traditional land, Campbell said, but can’t access that land this year because the river routes used to get there are too shallow.

Archie Antoine, a 78-year-old Cree elder, says he can’t risk running aground in shallow waters, and that he’s not the only one.

“If I broke my motor here, I don’t know how I’m going to get around. I can’t buy a motor. I can’t afford it,” he said.

“So I’m stuck in Fort Chip here. We’ve got no choice but to go and buy groceries in our Northern store,” Antoine said. “We can’t afford to jump in a plane and get groceries.”

Antoine and Campbell both say the delta’s water levels and wildlife populations have been declining for decades.

Campbell blames climate change, the oil industry’s water use, and B.C.’s two existing dams on the Peace River as factors.

The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation has also expressed concerns in the past about industry use of the river’s waters.

“I started trapping when I was about 15 years old,” Antoine said.

“The rapids just above Peace Point, in them days, you don’t even know there were rapids, the water was so high,” he said. Now a person can walk across the rapids at some points, he said.

“Ever since it started to get low, animals, you know for trapping, everything’s gone,” he said.

Antoine added that back in the mid-50s trappers could catch 50 muskrats a day. His best count last winter was 14.

A long-term plan is needed to ensure the river is preserved for all who use it, Campbell said.

“We need to sit down all together; federal government officials, provincial government officials, other provinces,” he said.

“We’ve all got to sit down and come up with a long term plan that’s going to benefit everyone.”

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/08/25/low-water-levels-in-athabasca-river-delta-affecting-residents-wildlife>

16 remote First Nations communities to ditch diesel and hook into Ontario power

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 27, 2015 4:06 PM ET Last Updated: Aug 27, 2015 4:06 PM ET



A agreement inked between Ontario and Wataynikaneyap Power will see 16 remote First Nations communities that currently rely on diesel power connected to the electricity grid. (Jeff Walters/CBC)

Ontario's energy minister observed the official inking of a new partnership Thursday morning.

Bob Chiarelli was at the signing of a partnership agreement between Wataynikaneyap Power — a transmission company owned by 20 First Nations — and two other companies: FortisOntario and Renewable Energy Systems Canada.

The partnership will build and operate a line from Ignace to Pickle Lake to connect 16 communities to the provincial power grid. Those communities are currently powered by diesel generation.

"It's lead by First Nations. The partnership has been established by the First Nations. They have been working with our government in order to meet all the regulatory requirements," Chiarelli told CBC News.

"It's really an impressive experience for the province of Ontario."

He added that the new transmission line from Ignace to Pickle Lake will also supply northwestern Ontario.

"But most importantly, for the first time, this will enable transmission to go into 21 First Nation remote communities."

Chair of Wataynikaneyap Power said their people's vision is to own, control and benefit from major infrastructure development in their homelands.

"Through this partnership, we are changing the landscape of how First Nations can do business into the future," Margaret Kenequanash said.

"Together we have reached a major milestone towards getting our communities off diesel generation, and improving the socio-economic situation for everyone's benefit."

As for the funding for the project, Kenequanash said a funding arrangement needs be negotiated with both levels of government.

"I think it would be a miss for the federal government not to come on side to establish that federal and provincial funding arrangement that's required. Because currently, they're spending \$98 million a year on diesel generator," Kenequanash added.

Kenequanash said the goal is to have all the communities hooked up by 2023.

There are 25 remote First Nation communities in Northwestern Ontario that currently rely on diesel power, the province stated in news release.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/16-remote-first-nations-communities-to-ditch-diesel-and-hook-into-ontario-power-1.3206259>

I Support First Nations Economic Prosperity, But Not Ill-Conceived LNG Deal

Posted: 08/24/2015 7:02 pm EDT Updated: 08/24/2015 7:59 pm EDT

[Adam Olsen](#), Interim Leader, BC Green Party



Malahat LNG has uncovered the tremendous complexity in decision-making for our communities, province and country.

Firstly, I want to be clear that I fully support and advocate for First Nations increasing our economic capacity. But, that does not mean I will necessarily support or advocate for a project proposed by a First Nation and it won't stop me from opposing the bad ones.

I am a member of [Tsartlip First Nation](#). My sister is an elected councillor for Tsartlip and I am fully aware of the dire financial situation of many First Nations communities. It is critical that First Nations communities find creative ways to free ourselves from the grip of the federal government and take hold of and determine the direction of our future.

Just because we have Aboriginal rights, and increasingly stronger legal precedents for successfully claiming title than ever before, does not mean every idea our elected leadership has is a good one. Despite my belief that Malahat First Nation has right to self-determination, I do not support [their LNG proposal](#).

Over the past decade, B.C. Premier Christy Clark and Prime Minister Stephen Harper have flooded us with a very narrow narrative. Opposition to oil and gas extraction and transport is opposition to the economy. According to them, opposing ill-conceived projects such as Malahat LNG in our neighbourhoods means we are against prosperity for First Nations, prosperity for communities, prosperity for all.

Of course our economy is far more diverse than the narrow perspective that our elected leaders want us to believe.

With so much information about transporting and cooling natural gas for export, we hardly need to wait for a complete application to determine if Bamberton is a suitable place for a liquefied natural gas terminal. We know it is not. Just like Howe Sound and the Fraser River are absurd places for loading LNG tankers destined for international markets.

Our premier and her cabinet colleagues have been so successful in narrowing the scope of the British Columbia economy that the B.C. NDP are loathed to speak against a bad project, like Malahat LNG, for fear that the government will continue to paint them as "anti-business."

It is messaging that the B.C. NDP official Opposition perpetuate themselves with their actions, often playing right into the hands of the government. Being wishy-washy about bad LNG projects is bad business.

Telling a proponent straight out that a project does not, and will not, meet the test well before forcing them to expend tremendous resources on it is entirely appropriate and provides the certainty that business is looking for.

Investment is stifled more when an investor does not know, and has no way of knowing, what playing field they are on and what conditions results in a sudden change of direction. With the B.C. NDP approach, it is impossible for a proponent to determine the test they have to pass.

What we have heard from both the federal and provincial NDP opposition is that ultimately projects such as Malahat LNG and the Trans Mountain pipeline can be acceptable if they go through a different process. In reality, the massive increases in shipments of diluted bitumen, liquefied natural gas and thermal coal in the Salish Sea do not make more sense because of a different process.

So frankly, B.C. NDP critic [Bruce Ralston's comments in the Times Colonist](#) about Malahat LNG are disappointing. It is obvious that Bamberton is not an acceptable location for an LNG terminal yet he just can't say it.

On the other hand, the B.C. Liberals' gold rush mentality, offering British Columbia's resources to eager corporations for pennies, is reckless and not the kind of "certainty" that respects the interests of British Columbians.

I am critical about the LNG business for social, economic and environmental reasons. I don't believe this industry should be subsidized by British Columbians and I am frustrated that Premier Clark and the Liberals are playing poker with all our cards face up on the table, and all our chips pushed in.

This does not make me anti-business, it is just common sense. Premier Clark's 2013 election campaign essentially handed all of our bargaining power to the oil and gas

industry. She didn't hand it over for free, but rather traded it for direct benefit to the B.C. Liberal Party and not the Province of British Columbia.

First Nations communities, who are desperate to preserve their culture and build a hopeful future for their members, are being enticed to chase the LNG pipe dream with big dollar promises and hypothetical jobs. So far, none of these promises have materialized and any hope the B.C. government may have for the LNG industry is based on a "generational sellout." From my experience, First Nations cannot afford the walk down this path to nowhere.

I am clear. I wish the Malahat First Nation luck in developing economic capacity in their community, but I will not support LNG in the Saanich Inlet. Furthermore, I do not support the "sellout" of British Columbia by the B.C. Liberals or inability of the B.C. NDP to take a clear position as they search for whatever position appears to be politically popular.

British Columbia needs strong, principled leadership. We may be open for business but we are not for sale. We have two centuries of complex history to find solutions for. The hopes, dreams and limited resources of First Nations and non-First Nations communities need us to get this right. Our collective prosperity and wellbeing cannot afford these important decisions being driven by partisan political self-interest.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/adam-olsen/bc-lng-malahat-first-nation-steelhead_b_8023318.html

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Nunavik leaders present Parnasimautik report to Plan Nord committee

'Good dialogue' between Nunavik leaders and Quebec ministers, says Makivik Corp president

By Natasha MacDonald-Dupuis, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 21, 2015 3:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 21, 2015 3:00 AM CT

Nunavik leaders met with the Plan Nord Ministerial Committee in Quebec City Wednesday to present the [Parnasimautik Consultation Report](#), Nunavik's reply to the province's 20-year plan for development in the region.

"We had good dialogue with the ministers present," said Jobie Tukkiapik, president of Makivik Corporation.

"They repeatedly mentioned that their Plan Nord cannot go ahead without the First Nations and Inuit on board."

More than 13 ministers attended the meeting, including Geoffrey Kelley, Quebec's minister responsible for Native Affairs, as well as Jean Boucher, MNA for Ungava, and Guy Bourgeois, MNA for Abitibi-Est. Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard joined them for a dinner at the end of the day.



Jobie Tukkiapik, president of the Makivik Corporation, says there was good dialogue with the ministers present at the Plan Nord committee meeting when Nunavik's Parnasimautik Consultation Report was presented. (Alec Gordon/CBC)

Parnasimautik (Let's Prepare) was the outcome of public consultation in all 14 Inuit communities in Northern Quebec, with Inuit living in Chisasibi and Montreal, and with the Naskapi of Kawawachikamach. It proposes a vision for the economic and social development of Nunavik.

"It gives a sense of where we, as Nunavimmiut, want to be going forward...that's why it's called Let's Prepare," said Tukkiapik.

Makivik Corporation's mandate is to protect the rights provided by the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the 2008 Nunavik Inuit Land Claim Agreement.

"There are areas that we want protected because we heavily rely on the land for sustenance," he said.

Nunavik leaders from Makivik and several other organisations, including the Nunavik Board of Health and the Nunavik Landholding Corp Association, expressed special concern over the projected mining exploration on their territory.

"A lot of the times it's someone coming in to take the resources out, without the Inuit benefiting from that," said Tukkiapik.

Leaders also discussed the housing crisis affecting Nunavik. Overall, Tukkiapik says the meeting was positive, and points out that mentalities have evolved a lot since Premier Robert Bourassa walked out on Inuit Leaders 40 years ago.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavik-leaders-present-parnasimautik-report-to-plan-nord-committee-1.3198483>

Ceremony highlights relationship between First Nations and City of Edmonton

By [Slav Kornik](#) Web Producer Global News



EDMONTON — Friday marked an important day in recognizing Alberta's history. The third annual Treaty No. 6 Recognition Day was held at Edmonton City Hall.

Treaty No. 6 Recognition Day commemorates the signing of the treaty between the Plains and Wood Cree people and the crown at Fort Carlton in Saskatchewan on Aug. 23, 1867, as well as the signing of the adhesion to Treaty No. 6 by local chiefs at Fort Edmonton on Aug. 21, 1877.

The event was hosted by the City of Edmonton. Mayor Don Iveson and First Nations Grand Chief of Treaty No. 6 Tony Alexis began the day with a flag-raising ceremony at Churchill Square outside city hall.

"Today is a celebration where we acknowledge the outstanding achievements and contributions of local First Nations people to the development of the region we call home," said Iveson.

"As Chiefs of the Treaty No. 6 territory, we've been committed to building an open dialogue with the City of Edmonton and Mayor Don Iveson," said Alexis. "I look forward to continuing to bridge the path the agreement was founded on as we look to new horizons and opportunities for the future."

Part of the future is focusing on education and the economy, Alexis added.

“As we move forward as communities, we have more people educated than ever in history. We’re maintaining our customs and tradition, we’re organizing ourselves strategically so that we can participate in the economics and businesses that happen around us.”

Premier Rachel Notley used the ceremony as an opportunity to reaffirm the province’s declaration to make indigenous culture and history part of the school curriculum in Alberta.

“We need to renew our relationship, renew our acknowledgement of the respect that we owe to indigenous leadership and to First Nations and to the treaty leadership here in Alberta,” said Notley.

The premier has attempted to build a strong relationship with Alberta’s First Nations community since being elected. In June, [she issued an apology for the province’s inaction against residential schools](#).

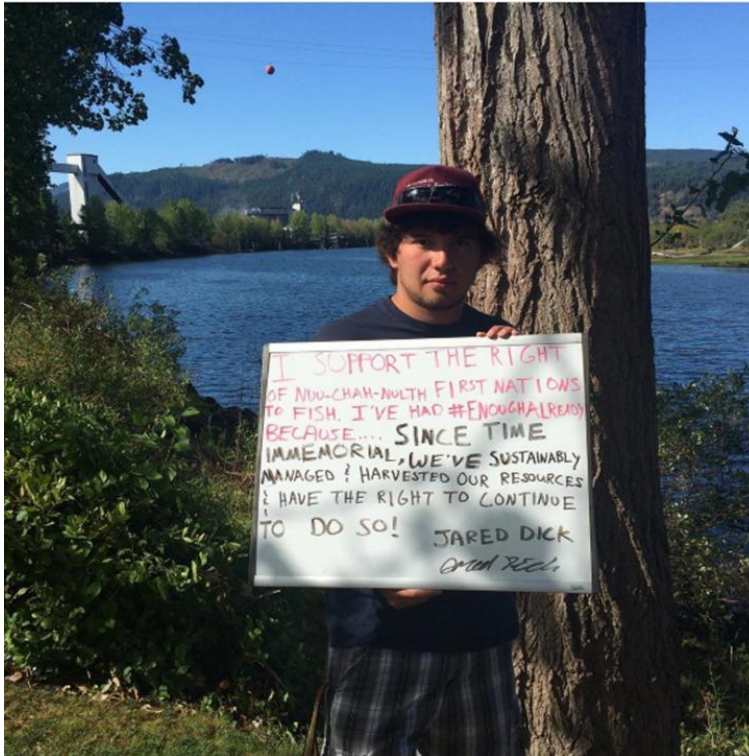
She also backed calls for an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women, reversing the former PC government’s position on the matter. It’s also something federal conservative leader Stephen Harper has resisted.

Edmonton City Council and Chiefs of the Nations within Treaty No. 6 also took part in the celebration.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2178285/ceremony-highlights-relationship-between-first-nations-and-city-of-edmonton/>

Enough Already, say First Nations

posted Aug 20, 2015 at 4:00 PM



Jared Dick holds a sign advocating for a west coast fishing agreement between Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Martin Wissmath Alberni Valley Times

With the federal election now underway, five West Coast First Nations are gaining social media exposure for a campaign to promote their fishing rights.

The Enough Already campaign was launched this summer by the Ahousaht, Ehattesaht/Chinekint, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations to pressure the federal government to develop a plan recognizing their rights to fish and sell fish in their traditional coastal territories. In 2009 the B.C. Supreme Court upheld those rights in a ruling and in 2014 the Supreme Court of Canada denied an appeal from the federal government.

The five First Nations, which belong to the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, have organized two fisheries: Gooseneck Barnacles, and Chinook Salmon, under the trade name Ha'oom Nuu-chah-nulth Wild Seafood. Their website is haoom.ca. But plans to develop their fisheries have stalled as they wait for the government to move forward on an agreement, according to the NTC.

“Rather than fishing and supporting our communities, we’ve been in and out of court fighting with the government to exercise rights we’ve already won. We’ve had enough!” reads a NTC statement sent to the *AV Times*. The five First Nations, also known as the Ta’aq-wiihak Nations, say they have been trying to negotiate a “fair and sustainable

fishing plan” with Fisheries and Oceans Canada that allows them to “benefit from the resources of our waters” for the past five and a half years.

Supporters of the Ta'aq-wiihak Nations have posted photos on social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, with a sign noting their agreement with the Enough Already campaign. A campaign website has been set up at enoughalready.ca and an Instagram page at [instagram.com/enoughalreadycampaign](https://www.instagram.com/enoughalreadycampaign). Their Twitter hashtag is #ENOUGHALREADY.

The First Nations contend that without a viable agreement in place for a fishing plan with the DFO, they are unable to support their families by fishing.

Direct Link: <http://www.avtimes.net/news/322431221.html>

Property owners, First Nations square off over rice farming in Ontario lake

James Whetung harvests the rice and sells it for \$12 a pound

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 21, 2015 6:32 PM ET Last Updated: Aug 21, 2015 7:41 PM ET



Larry Wood's family has owned property on Pigeon Lake for 70 years. He says this spot was open water until a few years ago. (Phillip Lee-Shanok/CBC)

There's a battle brewing between property owners on a lake in Ontario's Kawartha region and a First Nations group using the lake bed to seed and harvest rice.

At the centre of the dispute is Pigeon Lake, located north of Peterborough near Bobcaygeon.

Larry Wood, whose family has lived on the lake for more than 70 years, told CBC News the problem began about six years ago when a local man began seeding rice in the lake.

Wood, who says he is joined by more than 200 families opposed to the planting of rice on Pigeon Lake, says the rice has now spread from "shore to shore" choking out other plants and hindering recreational uses of the lake.

"If this is allowed to continue, Pigeon Lake as we know it will no longer exist," Wood told CBC News.

Wood is careful to point out that wild rice has grown in the lake for decades; a small patch has flourished near his property for as long as he can remember. But what he and a group of property owners are opposed to is the seeding of rice plants in the lake. Images his group [has posted on the 'Save Pigeon Lake' website](#) show rice plants growing over a large area on the lake — from above, it looks like a farmer's field.

He said the rice farming benefits one business owner to the detriment of all other lake users.

"It definitely is a commercial enterprise," said Wood. "No person should have the right to create their own fields to raise their own crop to sell something commercially that he personally grew in public waters."



A bag of rice harvested on Pigeon Lake sells for \$12 a pound on the Black Duck Wild Rice website. (Black Duck Wild Rice)

Rice grower unapologetic

James Whetung of the Curve Lake First Nation is unapologetic. He plants and harvests the rice, selling it for \$12 a pound under the brand name [Black Duck Wild Rice](#). He says that it feeds his community.

He sees the issue as one of aboriginal sovereignty and aboriginal peoples' right to access traditional foods.

"They hate me and what I'm doing. And they hate my people," said Whetung.

He says landowners accost him and call police when his family tries to harvest the rice.

"They don't want to see Indians getting rich and they use us for scapegoats for all their problems," he said.

Whetung says his people have gathered rice long before the cottagers came to the area.

"Why don't we kick them all off and take it all back," he said.

After spending three years lobbying various government bodies to prevent rice seeding on the lake, Wood said he and a group of neighbours were issued a permit by Parks Canada, which administers the Trent Severn Waterway, to "harvest aquatic weeds" from the lake at the end of July. A private company was hired to remove the rice from shoreline areas using a harvesting machine similar to a combine.

The weed harvesting was halted after a few days when a local First Nations group complained, arguing they weren't consulted about the removal of the rice, which is typically harvested in September.

"It's our right to harvest and gather so if any permits are given it should come through First Nations and not the Canadian government," said James Marsden, the chief of Alderville First Nation.

Parks Canada officials are planning to meet with First Nations groups next week to hear their side of the dispute and possibly reach a compromise.

Wood says property owners are "very upset" that the removal of planted rice was halted.

He said they're also frustrated by a lack of clarity about which government body has jurisdiction.

"When they bought their properties, none of this rice was here," said Wood.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/property-owners-first-nations-square-off-over-rice-farming-in-ontario-lake-1.3199187>

Strong First Nations voice key to redevelopment of Chaudière Falls area, panel agrees

[Paula McCooey, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: August 22, 2015 | Last Updated: August 24, 2015 8:22 AM EDT



Unceded Ottawa panelists from left: Chief Kirby Whiteduck, Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation; Josée Bourgeois, (Pow WowDancer, Memengweshii Council) Pikwàkanagàn First Nation; Moderator: Howard Adler, Artistic Director, Asinabka Aboriginal Film & Media Arts Festival; Shady Hafez, activist, Carleton University; Verna McGregor, Minwaashin Lodge, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, Albert Dumont, Poet, writer, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Paula McCooley, Ottawa Citizen,

Saturday, Aug. 22, 2015 Ottawa Citizen

The success of the redevelopment of Chaudière and Albert islands is a complex issue that hinges on a strong First Nations voice, a panel heard Saturday afternoon.

It was one of the few areas of agreement in the panel discussion, entitled Unceded Ottawa: The Algonquin and the Outaouais, dealing mainly with the massive Zibi residential development proposed for the former Domtar lands off Booth Street between Ottawa and Gatineau.

The panel was held inside a long-disused Albert Island warehouse that had been spruced up as part of Ottawa's Arboretum arts and music festival.

A concert was held the night before, making the discussion, which drew about 150 people, only the second public gathering on the island in more than 200 years — apart from industrial operations — since the days it was considered a sacred gathering place by the region's aboriginal communities. It is one of the islands next to the Chaudière Falls, territory the Algonquins say was never surrendered.

The public conversation was to enlighten people to the history and relationship of the Algonquins on both sides of the Ottawa River to the Outaouais region.

Panel member Chief Kirby Whiteduck, of the Pikwàkanagàn First Nation at Golden Lake, Ont., strongly supports Windmill Development Group's \$1.2-billion Zibi project's economic benefits and environmentally friendly approach. Among other things, Windmill has promised to hire Algonquin tradespeople whenever possible.

But Peter Stockdale, who is not a First Nations member, said that Whiteduck is "out of step with the Algonquin community."

"The main concern ... is that this is unceded Algonquin territory and now five communities and the Assembly of First Nations Quebec Labrador have come out opposing it," said Stockdale, speaking for the group "Freeing Chaudière Falls and Its Islands."

While Stockdale says he and his group supports First Nations job creation, they would rather see the Zibi project moved to Lebreton Flats and the islands turned in to a "central park" between Ottawa and Gatineau.

Such suggestions irked panelist Josée Bourgeois, who is on the Memengweshii Council, which is an advisory board to Windmill.

"Change comes with fear and people are afraid of change," said Bourgeois, who wondered who else will pay to clean up the contaminated industrial land.

"Zibi is a big answer to a problem and I can only speak for myself, but I believe it is a solution for my kids, my family's kids ... and our younger and older generation of tradespeople and all other aspects of labour."

Panelist Albert Dumont, a poet and writer from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabe at Maniwaki, stressed the need to protect the space as a spiritual sanctuary "for people to heal" over development.

"We don't need to give up a sacred site to have jobs," he said, drawing applause. "If we make a mistake here, we can't go back and change it."

But Bourgeois said those opposed to Zibi need an economic reality check, and the way to care for future generations is to provide opportunity.

"There are communities that are in dire straits and are in need of something revolutionary like this," said Bourgeois. "I'm sorry people but we are in a day and age where everybody's financial sustainability is on the line."

Shady Hafez, a law student and youngest voice on the panel, has roots in Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and Syria. While he says he is still pondering his stance on the Zibi project, he's clear the consultation process has not been thorough.

However Julie Westeinde, a First Nations engagement facilitator to Zibi, said the consultation process has been ongoing and open for the past two years and the key to moving forward is ensuring First Nations communities communicate with one another.

“The beauty of this project is the impact it can bring to the Algonquin people working together with the rest of the community, and it’s one step at a time and complex.”

Five Algonquin communities in Quebec oppose the development, which is named after the Algonquin word for river, and a handful of individuals, mostly non-Algonquin, have presented their objections to the Ontario Municipal Board, which is studying requests for zoning changes required by the development.

Among appellants at the OMB is well-known First Nations architect Douglas Cardinal who argues the land should be turned over for public use, with a focus on indigenous community and culture.

The City of Ottawa is asking that their appeal against rezoning of the former Domtar lands be dismissed.



The audience at Saturday's Unceded Ottawa panel discussion. Paula McCooey / Ottawa Citizen

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/strong-first-nations-voice-key-to-redevelopment-of-chaudiere-falls-area-panel-agrees>

Government should have consulted First Nations before announcing Hydro sell-off: Editorial

The Ontario government has a constitutional duty to consult First Nations when a decision will affect aboriginal land and rights. Selling off 60 per cent of Hydro One definitely falls into that category.



Chiefs of Ontario leader Isadore Day is joining a growing chorus of opposition to Liberal plan to sell off part of Hydro One.

Published on Sun Aug 23 2015

Premier Kathleen Wynne's government has been under increasing pressure to rethink its decision to sell off most of Hydro One to raise money for infrastructure spending since it announced the sale last spring.

First, a group of eight respected legislative watchdogs, including the auditor general and ombudsman, issued a joint — and blunt — [warning](#) that privatizing 60 per cent of the utility will “significantly reduce” their ability to hold it accountable on behalf of taxpayers.

Then an internal government [poll](#) found that 73 per cent of respondents believe the Crown electricity transmission utility should definitely or probably stay in public hands.

Now First Nations are rightly [asking](#) why they weren't consulted extensively about the planned sell-off of the company.

As Chiefs of Ontario leader Isadore Day explained to the Star's Sara Mojtahedzadeh, the sale could dramatically affect First Nations' economic and environmental fortunes. That alone should have triggered the government's constitutional duty to consult First Nations when they believe a decision will affect aboriginal land and rights.

There are, in fact, a number of reasons, constitutional and otherwise, that “extensive consultation” should have occurred, as Day argues.

The first is that so many of Hydro One's transmission lines run through First Nations traditional territories.

The second is that the utility has, after lengthy delays, implemented a welcome strict consultation and grievance process with First Nations communities. A sale could jeopardize that.

Finally, Hydro One's infrastructure projects have become a significant source of economic development for First Nations people. For example, the Saugeen Ojibway

Nation struck a deal with Hydro One in 2013 to acquire a 30 per cent stake — worth \$72 million — in a hydro transmission line crossing its traditional territory. All those relations could be threatened under the new ownership plan.

As Alex Monem, a lawyer representing numerous First Nations affected by the decision put it, the government has used its wholly owned corporations to reconcile “bad history” with First Nations. “Now they’re going to divest themselves of that vehicle.”

To be fair, the government has argued it will still maintain a larger share in Hydro One than any other investor. Other companies will not be allowed to buy more than 10 per cent of the utility. Still, there is a danger that private stakeholders could flex their muscle as a group, and push to ignore First Nations concerns about Hydro One projects or investment deals.

In the end, as the Star has previously argued, if the government isn’t going to rethink its decision it should at least hold on to a majority stake in Hydro One.

Ontario’s First Nations just gave it one more reason to do so.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2015/08/23/government-should-have-consulted-first-nations-before-announcing-hydro-sell-off-editorial.html>

Ontario government signs political accord with First Nations chiefs

Promise to work together on a range of issues, including resource benefits sharing, jurisdictional matters

The Canadian Press Posted: Aug 24, 2015 12:49 PM ET Last Updated: Aug 24, 2015 2:36 PM ET



Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day says the agreement represents a political path forward for First Nations in Ontario, and is the most important collective milestone in modern times. (submitted by Anishinabek Nation)

The Ontario government [has signed a political accord](#) with the Chiefs of Ontario that Premier Kathleen Wynne says will guide relations between First Nations and the province.

"As we've seen time and time again, when this relationship is not respected or when the trust is broken, the consequences are painful and long-lasting," said Wynne.

The accord signed by Wynne and Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day in a ceremony at the legislature creates a formal bilateral relationship between the government and First Nations.

"We've taken an important step to renew the relationship between First Nations and Ontario," she said. "I want to acknowledge that in some cases the relationship has to be built, that it's not even a matter of rebuilding, but it's a relationship that has to be built almost from scratch."

The accord affirms that First Nations have an inherent right to self-government and that the relationship with Ontario is based upon respect for that right, but exactly what that means remained unclear.



Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne says the newly signed accord represents a renewal of the relationship between the First Nations and Ontario and is an important step in the ongoing revitalization of First Nations communities. (Andrew Vaughan/Canadian Press)

"As I understand it, as we have discussions about education or social services or as we talk about economic well-being and resource revenue sharing, we need to define that self-government responsibility within each of those contexts," said Wynne. "I don't think that there's a blanket definition."

Treaty rights and the right to self-government "really aren't in question any more," said Day.

"What's in question is how do we start to rearrange the relationship with all levels of government to suggest that we have a rightful place at the table, and that we do need to

start building those systems so that we can start taking responsibility in our communities."

Treaties should have some sort of enforcement mechanism just like trade agreements between countries, added Day.

"These are the hard discussions that we're going to have to have," he said. "We must create criteria on what that enforcement means."

Premier to offer formal apology

The deal also commits the government and First Nations to work together on a range of issues, including resource benefits sharing and jurisdictional matters, and calls for two meetings a year with the premier.

Day called it "the most important collective milestone in modern times," and said it will help advance First Nations jurisdiction and treaty rights "on our own terms."

One of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was to add details on treaties, residential schools and First Nations history to Ontario's education curriculum, which will be done starting with a distribution of treaty maps to every public school, said Wynne.

"Everybody needs to understand the treaty promises our ancestors made that have since been broken, as well as our rights and responsibilities as treaty peoples today."

The premier said she would also apologize for the "horrors" of the residential schools and the "'60's scoop" of children from First Nations communities.

"We want to work with First Nations partners to make this apology formal, a full apology for these wrongs that I can deliver this fall on behalf of the government and all Ontarians."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/ontario-government-signs-political-accord-with-first-nations-chiefs-1.3201809>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Remains Found On Vancouver Island May Be Missing First Nations Teen

August 21, 2015 by [Cassandra Jeffery](#)

A group of kayakers came across a grisly discovery on Wednesday evening after finding human remains just east of Norway Island.

The Outer Gulf Islands RCMP, the Vancouver Island Integrated Major Crime Unit, West Coast Marine Section, Nanaimo RCMP, and the BC Coroners Service responded to the area on Vancouver Island on August 19th to recover the human remains.



Coroners are working to identify the deceased, but investigators believe the remains may be that of Delores Brown, who was reported missing back in July from nearby Penelakut Island.

Brown was last seen on July 27th and her disappearance was described by her family as “uncharacteristic.”

A preliminary investigation led officers to believe Brown’s disappearance was the result of foul play.

Brown is a 19-year-old First Nations woman and she was last seen walking on the Penelakut Island.

Once the individual has been properly identified, investigators will continue to establish how the person came to be near Norway Island, how they died, and whether foul play was involved.

Direct Link:

https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Provincial/15/08/21/Remains_Found_On_Vancouver_Island_May_Be_Missing_First_Nations_Teen

Manitoba teen completes 115-km run for missing, murdered indigenous women

Tracie Léost says Journey of Hope just beginning as she raises money for Families First Foundation

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 22, 2015 4:43 PM CT Last Updated: Aug 22, 2015 4:51 PM CT



A 16-year-old Manitoba girl has finished running 115 kilometres to raise awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada, but Tracie Léost says her work isn't over yet.

Léost began her Journey of Hope in the Lake Manitoba community of Oak Point on Wednesday morning. She completed it at The Forks in downtown Winnipeg on Saturday afternoon.

"I'm doing good. I'm feeling good to finally get here and have finished it and yeah, now on to new things to make this even bigger," Léost told CBC News after she arrived.



Tracie Léost, in the yellow shirt, gets ready to embark on the last leg of her Journey of Hope on Saturday morning. (Alana Cole/CBC)

The competitive runner said she was motivated to make the journey as a way of drawing attention to an important issue she feels needs to be addressed.

Her journey has not been easy — she said on one day, the blisters on her feet were so bad that she could not put shoes on. She ran part of the way in moccasins.

"The things these girls go through when they go missing, or in their last moment of their lives — I mean, it's nothing near the little blisters on my feet that I can one day get over, right?" she said.

Léost is also raising money for the Families First Foundation, which helps the families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

[A GoFundMe crowdfunding page](#) that she launched as part of the run raised \$1,708 of her \$2,000 goal as of Saturday afternoon.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-teen-completes-115-km-run-for-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-1.3200623>

Teenage girl runs 115K for missing and murdered Canadian indigenous women



A Manitoba teenager, Tracie Léost, is using running to draw attention to a prominent Canadian social issue. The 16-year-old ran 115 kilometres to raise awareness for missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

Starting in the Lake Manitoba region last Wednesday, Léost ran the distance all the way to downtown Winnipeg on Saturday, [reports the CBC](#).

She says this is an extremely important issue to her and it needs to be addressed.

By completing the run, Léost is not only raising awareness for the missing indigenous women (which includes Inuit and Metis groups as well as First Nations), she's also raising funds for [Families First Foundation](#), a not-for-profit designed to support the families of the missing and murdered.

Léost is Metis herself which brings her all the more close to the issue. "It scares you thinking 'that could be me' and I know I have so much more to achieve and I have so much life to live," said Léost [in an interview with the CBC](#). "So do those girls and that just gets stripped away from them."



The young runner's parents, friends and other family members accompanied her on the run, driving alongside and providing her with her needs throughout the trip.

[Amnesty International reports](#) there have been 1,017 missing indigenous women and girls from 1980 to 2012. Many of these cases have gone unsolved. This rate is seven times higher than the homicide rate of other women in Canada.

Last year, the RCMP released [Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview](#). It includes data from all police jurisdictions across Canada in the 33-year period.

This is the first initiative of its kind, reads the report.

For more on the missing and murdered women, the CBC has done in-depth investigations on unsolved cases. Find them [here](#).

Direct Link: <http://runningmagazine.ca/teenage-girl-runs-115k-for-missing-and-murdered-canadian-indigenous-women/>

Native American Actress Misty Upham: 'She Deserved Better' From Auburn Police

By [Jeannie Yandel](#) • Aug 24, 2015



Misty Upham arrives for a screening at the Cannes film festival in Cannes, France, on May 17, 2013.

Native American actress Misty Upham had an impressive resume, having appeared on screen with Meryl Streep and Julia Roberts in the film "August: Osage County," and with Benicio del Toro in "Jimmy P." But her personal life was in stark contrast to her Hollywood dream.

In October 2014, Upham was living in Auburn with her parents when she went missing. [A recent investigative report on the disappearance](#) by Kristen Millares Young for The Guardian found the Auburn police did very little to help find her.

Upham had moved from California to Washington to help take care of her father who was recovering from a stroke. Upham also suffered from mental illness and was accessing health care through the Indian Health Service.

"She needed to go through a process to reapply for her prescriptions to control her anxiety," Young told Jeannie Yandel on *The Record*. "She had been in Washington for months, and one by one, these prescriptions were running out. According to her friends

and family, she turned to alcohol to try to dull this constant anxiety and panic that she suffered."

Seven weeks before she went missing, she was arrested outside of a deli across the street from the family's apartment. An employee called the police and said Upham was shoeless and hiding in the bushes outside the store.

All of her grit and determination would be dismissed because she was a brown woman who occasionally acted erratically in front of the police.

Young reported that when the police arrived on the scene, they dragged Upham from the bushes, handcuffed her and put her in the squad car. They didn't believe her claims of being a movie star and openly mocked her.

"One of the officers said to her, 'Well if you're so famous, if you're an actress, why don't you call up your friend Robin Williams and have him come save you?'"

Upham was involuntarily committed that night. Her father, Charles Upham, wrote in a Facebook update that she had a swollen jaw, black eye and scratches and bruises on her shoulder. He said his daughter didn't remember how she was injured.

"When Auburn police later characterized their interaction with Misty Upham, they said that they had acted with professionalism and compassion," Young said. "In this officer's own report from that evening, he admitted that he mocked her and her lack of agency."

Misty Upham went missing on Oct. 5, 2014. She had been inconsolable and left the apartment after her father called the police.

"The police made him go back upstairs to search the apartment — they did not believe that she was not there — and those were critical minutes," Young said. "We know from the King County medical examiner's estimate that she died around 9 p.m. that same day in woods that are within very short walking distance. But what we don't know is when those police officers were with her father, was she already in the woods?"

Upham had been missing for close to two weeks when her body was found by family friends. But according to Young, Auburn police didn't do enough to find her.

"Their search was intermittent, and I know that had it been one of their daughters who had gone missing, they would have created a radically different response. If you look at other investigations that they were conducting, they use their Facebook page as a way to gather tips, they gave updates. They didn't even go to Facebook to distribute a photo of Misty. In fact the only time that they began sharing on social media or via press release was when constant pressure from the public and the media made it more efficient for them to do so rather than responding individually. That's a bare minimum to announce that a member of a community is missing and ask for tips.

"Misty Upham was treated like her life had no value. I think about this person who against all odds had accomplished tremendous things — she was a preeminent Native actress and she was young still. All of that grit and determination would be dismissed because she was a brown woman who occasionally acted erratically in front of the police.

"We don't know what would have made the difference for her, but that she was not given that chance — she deserved better."

Direct Link: <http://kuow.org/post/native-american-actress-misty-upham-she-deserved-better-auburn-police>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Two High Schools Drop Native American Imagery, But Keep Mascots

[Sheena Louise Roetman](#)

8/20/15

Two high schools in West Hartford, Connecticut have replaced their Native American-based mascot imagery after a yearlong decision-making process.

Conard and Hall high schools will both begin classes next Wednesday with new logos. Conard's will be a red "C" on a shield while Hall's will be a blue "H" and "W" on a shield.



The Conard High School symbol with a headdress on the 'C.'

Hall High School had previously done away with the image of a Native American head in a war bonnet in 2012, but now both schools will remove all imagery related to Native Americans.

Due to a compromise reached in March, however, both schools will retain their names – the Conard Chieftans and the Hall Warriors.

The process began last fall when the two schools played each other in soccer. [According to the Hartford Courant](#), some students were overheard chanting anti-Semitic statements, which prompted a letter from school administrators to the school communities addressing the incident.

Afterward, some students reported that they were uncomfortable with the imagery used by both schools and that they felt it was insensitive to Native Americans.

Several school board meetings and community forums were held over the following months, resulting in the decision last spring to change the logos.

“We’re very proud of the work that’s been done by the students and the faculty and the community at both Hall and at Conard,” Assistant Superintendent Andy Morrow told the Hartford Courant.

Several student organizations, including the Conard student newspaper, are considering or have already taken actions to make their names more appropriate.

The First Amendment prohibits school administrators from forcing student organizations to change names, but Conard Principal Julio Duarte told the Hartford Courant that the pep club, previously called “The Tribe” has temporarily decided to go by “The Red C.”

The student paper, previously the PowWow, changed its name to Wow!Pow! in March after the decision was finalized.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/20/two-high-schools-drop-native-american-imagery-keep-mascots-161477>

7 Things About Native Americans You'll Never Learn From the Mainstream Media

By [Zak Cheney-Rice](#) August 21, 2015
Like Mic on Facebook:

Native Americans have endured years of misrepresentation by the media. Whether in TV, film, print or online, the stories we tell — or refuse to tell — about indigenous peoples have not only enshrined harmful stereotypes, but fueled centuries of land graft, state violence and containment in the United States, the reverberations of which are still felt today.

To unravel how these narratives impact Native communities — and what needs to be done to reclaim them — *Mic* spoke to three indigenous media makers: actress and poet MorningStar Angeline, who is Shoshoni, Blackfoot, Nez Perce, and Chippewa Cree; writer and photographer Jason Morgan Edwards, who is of African and Seminole descent; and Apsáalooke fashion designer Bethany Yellowtail.

Below are the stories they've said need to be told about Natives in the media today — and most importantly, told by Natives themselves:

1. We are diverse.

Natives are often represented as a "blanket ethnicity," Yellowtail told *Mic*: They wear feathers and headdresses. They live in tepees. They paint their faces, ride horses, "wear fringe" and shoot bows and arrows.

In reality, there are more than [560](#) federally recognized Native tribes in the U.S., originating from every corner of the country, from the forests of upstate New York to the deserts of northern Arizona, and most places in between.

The cultural diversity among these populations mirrors their geographic diversity. Language, history, customs and migration patterns all vary, to the point that the idea they wear the same type of traditional clothing, build the same housing and engage in the same traditions is laughable.

"It matters that the media doesn't showcase this diversity," Yellowtail said. "It trickles down to our communities. It limits what our people can imagine themselves to be."

2. We are not dying.

"The common box Native Americans ... are constantly put in is the idea that we are artifacts or nonexistent," Angeline told *Mic* via email. "[The media tends] to focus on Native Americans in period pieces and very rarely are Native American-inspired or -produced films set in contemporary times produced or supported."

Even a simple Google Image search of "Native American" reveals how rare it is to find an image of an indigenous person from before 1880, whether in drawings, paintings, photographs or other media.

This modern erasure, Yellowtail added, "affects how young people shape their ambitions ... How can they envision a future when they aren't seen as alive?"

"I'd like to see a serious Google overhaul," she went on. "[When] the rest of the world Googles 'Native American,' I want them to see the real diversity and beauty of contemporary Native America. I want them to see ... Winona LaDuke (activist), Gyasi

Ross (lawyer, author and poet), Shoni Schimmel (WNBA player), Jeri Brunoe (performer and motivational speaker), Martin Sensmeier (actor), Sam McCracken (GM- Nike N7), Denise Juneau (U.S. politician) and Georgia Tsingine (doctor)."

In other words, indigenous America is not only the past, but also the present and future.

3. We are versatile.

"If you name any profession, any one at all, I can name a Native person that excels in that field," Edwards told *Mic* in an email. "As far as film and TV, I personally know several accomplished actors, writers, directors, etc. But the majority of them are not household names, because they are type-cast into 'Indian' roles."

Options for Native talent remain limited in mass media. If filmmakers need someone with "long, black hair, to ride a horse, wearing buckskin and war paint," of course they cast a Native, Edwards said. "But if you need a scholarly, clean-shaven, young hero to save mankind from certain doom, your first choice is a Brad Pitt-type."

Limits to Hollywood's racial imagination are becoming apparent: Despite [data](#) showing that racial diversity can correspond with box office success, major mainstream films continue to shut out actors of color.

But this dynamic is not limited to the movies. What we are able to imagine Natives doing on-screen can also reflect in how we imagine them in day-to-day life.

"I'd like to communicate that we don't just exist in Louis L'Amour novels," Edwards said. "And we don't all live in tepees. We are doctors and lawyers and astronauts and just regular people, just like anyone else."

4. We are bigger than your fantasies.

We all remember Disney's *Pocahontas*. "Indian Princess" or "squaw" fantasies and their type have fueled the historical mythologies — and sexual imaginings — of Westerners for generations.

But the danger lies in the truths they obscure. In a series of tweets on Wednesday, Angeline highlighted, for instance, an account of Pocahontas' actual (although widely [debated](#)) history that [includes](#) her kidnapping, sexual assault and coerced marriage to Englishman John Rolfe — all while she was just a teenager.

"There's nothing accurate or positive about these [fantasies], so they need to be fully deconstructed and ultimately destroyed," Angeline said.

This fantasy also misses a brutal reality. According to [Amnesty International](#), Native women are 2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the U.S., and in 86% of reported cases, their attackers are non-Native men.

"When you see hyper-sexualized and fetishized images of Native women in pop culture and media, you have to also remember the assaults, and the missing and murdered [indigenous women in Canada](#)," Yellowtail said.

5. We have urgent stories that need to be told.

There's another problem with framing Natives as relics of a bygone era: It ignores the pertinent challenges they face literally as we speak.

Aside from disproportionate rates of [poverty](#), [trauma](#) and violence at the hands of [law enforcement](#), multiple Native-focused stories bear far more coverage in the news today, Yellowtail said.

The [protests](#) against the government [swap](#) of a Native holy site in Arizona called Oak Flat to a Phoenix-based mining company are one example; the EPA gold mine [spill](#) that happened in Colorado earlier this month that's devastating the Navajo Nation is another; the group of activists that recently [chased](#) Sen. John McCain off a Navajo reservation in Arizona; and the [protests](#) blockading construction of the Keystone XL pipeline — all are issues that people nationwide should know about.

6. We create and showcase our own art.

Angeline makes a stark distinction: "No representation is better than harmful representation."

In some cases, Natives are blatantly disrespected in media environments, which is reportedly why Native actors [walked off](#) the set of Adam Sandler's *Ridiculous Six* film. In other cases, roles meant to represent them are given to white actors, as when Rooney Mara was [cast](#) as Tiger Lily in the *Peter Pan* reboot, or Jane Krakowski as [Jacqueline Voorhees](#) in *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*.

Angeline points to a lack of Native presence both on- and off-set in media as the problem. But there's plenty of Native talent working now to cultivate more Native talent, while taking stands against the bigotry that would otherwise marginalize them.

Edwards, a journalist, is currently covering the Santa Fe Indian Market, one of the country's largest gatherings of Native artists. "Natives have made significant inroads in media," he said. "[And] when I interview them for stories, I really try to make [them] relatable.

"My grandma used to tell me, 'Jason, the Lord gave you two ears but only one mouth for a reason.' I don't just write about Natives. I am Native. And I am a part of the community."

Angeline is strictly principled in the kind of work she accepts. "There will always be someone to fill roles that do not accurately portray Native American's or flat-out

disrespect our culture, tribes, women, men, children, etc.," she said. "I have just made a conscious choice to not be a part of such projects. That often means less work, less money, possibly less 'success' — but I don't think assisting these negative portrayals would be my kind of success anyway."

7. We are everywhere.

The popular perception of where Natives live today remains quite limited.

"[We] are perceived as disappeared or people of the past and not living, breathing peoples of this century," Yellowtail said. Indeed, the most widely proliferated images of Natives frame them in either historical or rural contexts — either *Dances With Wolves* or the rare piece of media set on a reservation.

However, 7 out of 10 indigenous Americans live in metropolitan areas, according to U.S. Census data reported in the [New York Times](#). This migration has swelled since the 1940s, when only 8% lived in cities. "When you look at it as a percentage, the black migration [of the 1920s to 1940s] was nothing in comparison to the percentage of Native Americans who have come to urban areas," Dr. Philip R. Lee, an emeritus professor of social medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, told the *New York Times*.

It's time for the real stories to be told. It's time for the lies to end.

Direct Link: <http://mic.com/articles/124160/7-things-about-native-americans-you-ll-never-learn-from-the-mainstream-media>

Voices of Alaska: Inuit Circumpolar Council responds to climate change

Posted: August 22, 2015 - 4:27pm

By [James Stotts](#)

Inuit Circumpolar Council Response to the topic of Global Climate Change

By James Stotts, ICC-Alaska President

Climate change poses a tremendous risk to the food security of Alaska's indigenous peoples, and changes in state and federal policies could go a long way toward mitigating that risk and averting a potential crisis.

Climate change has already impacted traditional food sources, and will likely create more disruption. Changing weather patterns have limited the ability to go hunting. Sea ice has

diminished and become more unstable. Species of wildlife have changed their migration patterns. Melting permafrost is reshaping the environment. Changing ocean conditions and rising water temperatures are altering fish runs. Foraging locations continue to change or even diminish as forest fires become more widespread.

The environment is changing and our Indigenous knowledge is having to adjust and account for these changes. And the change is occurring at an ever faster rate, particularly in the coastal areas, creating domino effects for entire food chains.

With their control over vast amounts of land and the process for establishing hunting and fishing regulations, the state and federal governments have the authority to assist in the survival of indigenous culture, or hasten its decline.

As the stewards of the land for thousands of years, we need to have a say in federal and state resources management. Based on our practiced observations of evolving conditions, we have ideas about how to conserve our resources while allowing access for the people most in need. Too often, however, our ideas have been dismissed by the state as contrary to the preferences and convenience of urban area residents.

Though climate change is generally acknowledged as a reality by all those who have studied the data objectively, the political will to take decisive action to mitigate and adapt has been sadly lacking. Sitting down and talking with indigenous peoples is an effective way for both the federal and state governments to avert a food security crisis in rural Alaska that is currently on track to happen sooner than previously predicted.

The federal government should be a stronger advocate for indigenous hunting and fishing rights and be more forceful in upholding its obligations under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). The federal government should set precedent for a new and cooperative relationship with Alaska Natives by strengthening and implementing resource co-management systems. Co-management results in mutual decision-making, providing the managers with more information and the users with more responsibility.

Likewise, the State of Alaska should cooperate with Alaska Native communities and leaders on wildlife management issues. In policy and regulation development, food security should be prioritized over other resource uses.

As the first resource managers, we are highly adaptable. Amidst the current changes, we will adapt accordingly and allow future generations to thrive for thousands of years to come. The State of Alaska and U.S. federal government should institute a formal consultation process to result in satisfactory outcomes for all parties that allow Alaska Natives—and all who live in this great land—to keep up with the rapidly changing environment.

James Stotts has a long history of involvement with the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). He represented Alaska on the first ICC Executive Council in 1980. Jimmy currently serves as the President of ICC-Alaska.

Direct Link: <http://peninsulaclarion.com/opinion/2015-08-22/voices-of-alaska-inuit-circumpolar-council-responds-to-climate-change>

Ex-astronaut promotes STEM studies among Native Americans

The Associated Press, August 23, 2015

RAPID CITY, S.D.

A former NASA astronaut is trying to get Native American students to develop an interest in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/1MDqjVo>) reports John Herrington, the first Native American to walk in outer space, has met in Rapid City with members of the American Indian Institute for Innovation.

Herrington is board chairman of the Rapid City-based educational organization. He says the institute works with Native American students to "improve their chances for success" in STEM fields.

The institute partners with a summer program at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology that exposes Native American students to a college environment during high school years.

Herrington, who's a member of the Chickasaw nation, says 100 percent of the program's alumni graduate high school.

Read more here:

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/article31957404.html#storylink=cpy>

Marijuana Legalized On Wisconsin Native American Reservation



Marijuana is now legal to possess and smoke on a Wisconsin Native American Reservation, according to reservation officials.

Last week, members of the [Menominee tribe](#) in Wisconsin voted 677 to 499 to legalize marijuana on its 360 acre reservation for recreational use. The vote to legalize the use of marijuana for medicinal usage passed even more overwhelmingly with a vote of 899 to 275 in favor.

Shortly after the legalization was passed, Menominee chairman Gary Besaw gave a statement.

“This is new ground. We have to start looking at developing best practices and draft ordinances to maximize the benefits we believe are possible and minimize the consequences we believe also are possible.”

So, how does this all work? The sale and possession of marijuana are illegal under Wisconsin state law, so how can it be legal on the reservation? State law enforcement authorities do not have criminal jurisdiction on reservations like the Menominee. (However, state law enforcement officers do have the power to arrest anyone who leaves the reservation in possession of the drug.) On the other hand, federal authorities do have the power to enforce criminal jurisdiction on the reservation.

If you’re confused by the distinction, you’re not the only one. Experts say that the apparent legalization of marijuana on the reservation could bring with it a whole host of legal issues for the tribe.

The director of California Indian Legal Services, Dorothy Alther, commented on the Menominee reservation’s [marijuana decision](#) to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

“Tribes are treading on very dangerous grounds. If I was representing tribes out there, I would say it might not be such a good idea.”

California tribes have been raided in the past by federal authorities for doing the very same thing the Menominee are in the process of proposing, even though the U.S. Department of Justice released a memorandum to federal authorities “discouraging” them from prosecuting reservations for selling or growing marijuana.

Even though the Menominee tribe has voted to approve the growth and sale of marijuana, they may still be restricted to only selling it to Native Americans, and they may ultimately be stripped of their federal funding if a conservative bill just proposed by Oklahoma Representative James Lankford passes into law.

Still, the money that may possibly be made with the growth and sale of marijuana could potentially be a real boon to the Menominee reservation.

Of the 10 other reservations in Wisconsin, at least three others besides the Menominee are seriously looking at legalizing the growth and sale of marijuana.

What do you think? Should Native American reservations be able to make their own rules and laws concerning marijuana, or should they be bound by the laws of the state in which they reside?

Read more at <http://www.inquisitr.com/2360191/marijuana-legalized-on-wisconsin-native-american-reservation/#mRFeAwkuOWq6jjdc.99>

Federal Reserve launches Center for Indian Country Development

New center will try to combat widespread poverty on reservations.

By [Matt McKinney](#) Star Tribune

August 22, 2015 — 4:39pm



Big challenges: The Federal Reserve's new Center for Indian Country Development will look at issues including land, housing and education.

Taking aim at the widespread poverty rates commonly found on reservations, the Federal Reserve bank in Minneapolis has launched a new center for the development of Indian Country.

The center will look at everything from land issues to education, personal loans to private businesses, acting as a clearinghouse for a variety of issues and projects. It will convene a roundtable of experts who will occasionally meet.

“This is in line with what we have been doing informally for a couple of decades,” said bank vice president Richard Todd.

The Center for Indian Country Development will be codirected by Sue Woodrow, a bank employee who has led other Indian Country initiatives for the Minneapolis Fed, and Patrice Kunesh, the former deputy undersecretary of rural development at the USDA. Kunesh is of Standing Rock Lakota descent.

The center’s priorities haven’t been chosen yet, said Todd, and will in part depend on direction from American Indian leaders and those already working on the economic development of Indian Country.

The problem of land ownership is a likely candidate, since tribal land often gets divided between heirs to the point that land parcels become so small they’re unworkable for development. It also makes it difficult for those who want to use reservation land as mortgage collateral.

Housing and education are also likely areas of focus for the center, he said.

Indian reservations across the country have had some of the worst poverty rates in the nation, with high unemployment and little economic opportunity. The casino industry that blossomed over the past two decades has helped only some of the bands, particularly those near larger cities or vacation destinations.

The center will carry on the work that the Minneapolis Fed has done in the past, said Todd. Some of those projects included assistance with the development of the Model Tribal Secured Transaction Act, a law that knocked down barriers American Indians faced when applying for loans from agencies outside the reservation.

The Fed over the years has also examined food deserts, access to banks, tax credits, tribal colleges and tribal land buyback programs, among other things.

The center’s mission statement will be left intentionally broad, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis President Narayana Kocherlakota said in a statement. The center will also partner with tribal organizations and others working on relevant projects.

The Minneapolis Fed covers an area from Montana and the Dakotas to Minnesota, northwestern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The region includes 45 Indian reservations.

The leadership council for the Center for Indian Country Development includes Dante Desiderio of the Native American Finance Officers Association; Miriam Jorgensen of the

Native Nations Institute; Jacqueline Johnson Pata of the National Congress of American Indians; Jaime Pinkham of the Bush Foundation; Cris Stainbrook of the Indian Land Tenure Foundation; Sarah Dewees of the First Nations Development Institute; Elsie Meeks, the state director of the USDA Rural Development program in South Dakota; John Phillips of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, Gerald Sherman of Bar K Management and attorney and former North Dakota agriculture commissioner Sarah Vogel.

Direct Link: <http://www.startribune.com/federal-reserve-launches-center-for-indian-country-development/322596191/>

Epigenetic Inheritance: Holocaust Study Proves What Native Americans Have 'Always Known'



Research into epigenetic inheritance conducted on Holocaust survivors has demonstrated scientific evidence of the transmission of trauma onto one's descendants, but this idea is nothing new for Native Americans. The Mount Sinai research team, led by Rachel Yehuda, examined the genes of 32 Jewish individuals who had witnessed torture or experienced torture, been interned in a concentration camp by Nazi forces, or been forced into hiding during the era of the second world war. The team also examined their children's genes. Children of holocaust survivors are known to have an increased likelihood of suffering from stress disorders, but earlier research into possible epigenetic inheritance led these scientists to look past child-rearing differences at the actual genes of these descendants of holocaust survivors. What they found surprised a lot of people, but apparently came as absolutely no surprise to Native Americans whom still held onto traditional beliefs of their ancestors.

"The gene changes in the children could only be attributed to Holocaust exposure in the parents," Yehuda said of the genetic research which was published in *Biological Psychiatry*.

The team took a look specifically at one region of a gene that is known to be associated with regulating stress hormones.

“It makes sense to look at this gene,” [Yehuda said](#), according to *The Guardian*. “If there’s a transmitted effect of trauma, it would be in a stress-related gene that shapes the way we cope with our environment.”

The team was right. Epigenetic tags in that region were found in the exact part of the gene in Holocaust survivors and their offspring, but was completely missing in any other control group. Just to make sure that the actual stress from survivors of the Holocaust wasn’t passed along through actual trauma to their children, they conducted further genetic analyses. That possibility was reportedly ruled out through the analyses.

“To our knowledge, this provides the first demonstration of transmission of pre-conception stress effects resulting in epigenetic changes in both the exposed parents and their offspring in humans.”

“Native healers, medicine people and elders have always known this and it is common knowledge in Native oral traditions,” [LeManuel Bitsoi](#), Navajo, Ph.D Research Associate in Genetics at Harvard University, stated at the Gateway to Discovery conference in 2013 when the theory was pushed more into the forefront of scientific research, according to *Indian Country Today*.

Bonnie Duran is the associate professor in the Department of Health Services at the University of Washington School of Public Health. She is also the Director for Indigenous Health Research at the Indigenous Wellness Research Institute. She says that many health disparities found among the Native American people can be traced back through epigenetics to a “colonial health deficit” resulting from the colonization of America.

Native researcher Dr. Teresa Brockie, Research Nurse Specialist at the National Institute of Health, also claims that epigenetic changes might be linked to health disparities among Native Americans including endocrine and immune disorders.

“The persistence of stress associated with discrimination and historical trauma converges to add immeasurably to these challenges,” Brockie and her fellow researchers wrote, according to *Indian Country Today*.

An earlier study in mice from [Emory University](#) found that mice were even able to pass along a learned smell-associated onto their descendants. In response to that epigenetic inheritance research, Professor Marcus Pembrey, a children’s geneticist at University College London said that it is “high time public health researchers took human transgenerational responses seriously,” adding, “I suspect we will not understand the rise in neuropsychiatric disorders or obesity, diabetes and metabolic disruptions generally without taking a multigenerational approach.”

“We as individuals cannot be isolated from either the present or past generations of our family,” [Ginny Razier wrote](#) in an article for the Manataka American Indian Council. “Families, it seems, transmit across many generations values, expectations, even

sentiments and emotions. A fear of falling short of expectations or a feeling that family problems are your own fault can be passed on in a family as surely as brown hair, high cheekbones and broad shoulders.”

Native Americans reportedly believe more than just trauma can be passed along through the generations. In her article, Razier explained that many Native Americans believe that even food habits and awareness of herbs can be unknowingly passed along. Razier claims that “studies have indicated a link between memory of these and Native American ancestry.” Gitksan writer Shirley Muldon, whose people are indigenous to Canada wrote that, in addition to believing in reincarnation and that dead relatives can visit this world, the Gitksan people believe that “memory survives from generation to generation.” Professor Joseph Gone, member of the Gros Ventre tribe of Montana and instructor at the University of Michigan pointed out that if people’s trauma can be epigenetically inherited, perhaps [Native Americans](#) also hold a hidden gene for resilience given the propensity of the people to maintain culture and beliefs despite the deliberate cultural eradication and [traumatic history](#) their ancestors endured.

Discover Magazine author [Dan Hurley](#) asked, “And what if we could create a pill potent enough to wipe clean the epigenetic slate of all that history wrote? If such a pill could free the genes within your brain of the epigenetic detritus left by all the wars, the rapes, the abandonments and cheated childhoods of your ancestors, would you take it?”

Well, would you?

Read more at <http://www.inquisitr.com/2352952/epigenetic-inheritance-holocaust-study-proves-what-native-americans-have-always-known/#sjH0VVZcejHK2JOx.99>

Native Americans' Totem Pole Journeys to Oppose Coal Exports

PORTLAND, Ore. — Aug 21, 2015, 8:55 PM ET

By GOSIA WOZNIACKA Associated Press

A Native American tribe is taking a 22-foot totem pole from Canada through the Pacific Northwest to [Montana](#) in opposition of proposed coal export terminals.

A team from the Lummi Nation, from Washington's Puget Sound, started the journey on Friday. The pole will travel more than 1,300 miles by truck, from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Missoula, with multiple stops in Washington and [Oregon](#).

Its journey includes blessing ceremonies at each of the proposed coal ports and in tribal communities and houses of worship along the oil train route.

The totem pole is destined for Montana's Otter Creek Valley, the location of a proposed coal mining expansion that would serve the Pacific Northwest terminals.

The Lummi Nation and other tribes are against building coal-export terminals at Cherry Point near Bellingham, in Longview, and at the Port of Morrow on the Columbia River. Cherry Point encompasses the Lummi Nation's ancestral sites and traditional fishing grounds.

The projects would export millions of tons of coal annually to Asia. The tribes say the terminals would disrupt treaty-protected fishing rights, contaminate air and water, and harm sacred sites.

The totem pole was created by the House of Tears Carvers at the Lummi Nation. It took four months for a team to create it, said the tribe's master carver Jewell James.

Traditionally, totem poles use powerful symbols to depict visions, pass on tribal mythology or mark important tribal or family events, Jewell said. They're used at ceremonies, to honor the deceased, or to record stories.

But over the past years, the tribe has put them to a novel use; tribal members have taken the totem poles off the reservation to areas struck by disaster or facing a crisis, as symbols of strength and wisdom, Jewell said.

The Lummi have delivered totem poles to New York, [Pennsylvania](#) and Washington, D.C., after the 911 terrorist attacks. Last year, the tribe took a totem pole to Sioux territory in Northern Alberta to oppose tar sand mining, and the previous year to Vancouver to protest a proposed oil pipeline.

The symbols carved into the current totem are to encourage wise decisions that protect the environment, Jewell said. They include a medicine wheel, which symbolizes the transfer of traditional knowledge to tribal members; a flying eagle, which stands for spiritual knowledge; and a turtle representing the earth.

"We're all united as tribes in not wanting coal coming to our territory," Jewell said. "The coal will contaminate the air and leak into the water supply. And it will drop as acid rain when it's burned."

Pacific International Terminals, the company that has proposed building the terminal at Cherry Point just south of the Canadian border, did not immediately return calls for comment regarding the environmental impacts of the terminal.

Supporters say the projects would create jobs and generate revenue for local governments. They also say exporting large amounts of coal to Asia would have a negligible effect on global greenhouse gas emissions.

At each stop on the totem pole route, the tribe will present the pole to the community at a meeting with environmental activists, faith leaders and local residents.

The tribe will offer the totem pole to the Northern Cheyenne Nation at Otter Creek in Montana. That tribe will then take the pole on another three-week journey to oppose the coal expansion. Afterward, it will be placed upright at a totem pole raising ceremony on the Cheyenne Nation reservation.

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/native-americans-totem-pole-journeys-oppose-coal-exports-33238299>

French-Canadian festival near Huot, Minn., celebrates culture

By [Anna Burleson](#) on Aug 23, 2015 at 8:53 p.m.

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HUOT, MINN.—Even though the wind picked up and it started to rain, most didn't appear to notice as the Asham Stompers clogged on stage at the Chautauqua and French-Canadian and Metis Festival.



In a small clearing along the Red Lake River called Old Crossing and Treaty Park near Huot, Minn., about 100 people came and went throughout the overcast, windy day to experience French-Canadian food and culture, including the Stompers.

Virgil Benoit, president of the group that has held the event for 33 years called the Association of the French of the North, said its purpose is to celebrate French-Canadian and Metis history as there is a large population in that area of Minnesota.

"We commemorate the history of French-Canadians which isn't commemorated a lot in the United States," he said. "In this area we're the largest collective ... there were several communities of French-Canadian origin from the late 1800s so there's a need for this."

At about that time, explorers from Canada had began searching further south, exploring and eventually creating trade routes and settling in what is now northern Minnesota.

Many at the event walked around holding thick slices of white bread slathered with butter and honey from the tent where Marjorie LaCoursiere stood in an old fashioned dress monitoring the wood-burning stove where the loaves baked.

Wendell Landon was also there making homemade brooms as the Wolven Band from Manitoba played upbeat dancing music in a tent nearby. Landon said the number of brooms he makes in a day varies with how his hands feel.

"It's a quintessential American craft and it's something we should be doing for ourselves," he said, weaving string between the straw of the broom.

Sunday was the third and final day of the event. AFRAN Treasurer Gerald Amiot said more people had come out in prior days and in recent years the festival has been bigger than ever thanks to a renewed interest in arts grants. The event was partially funded by a \$9,000 grant from the Northwest Minnesota Arts Council.

"We just want to make people proud of their French-Canadian heritage and remember their what their forefathers did in developing and settling this land," Amiot said.

The festival's location also had special meaning as it's where a treaty that was signed in the mid-1800s with Ojibwe tribes, when known as Chippewa. The historic Pembina Trail for Red River ox carts to cross the river also used to run through the area.

"We continue to remind people the impact the French-Canadians had in settling this area, the early pioneers who came here from Quebec," Amiot said.

Even though she grew in in the area it was Carol Olson's first time there.

"I'm totally in awe" she said as she sat at the AFRAN membership table. "I just didn't know French-Canadians were settled here. I just thought there were Norwegians and Swedes and Polaks, so it's interesting."

Direct Link: <http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/region/3823660-french-canadian-festival-near-huot-minn-celebrates-culture>

As national media hone in on Alaska, ICC plots its course

By [Ben Matheson, KYUK - Bethel](#) | August 24, 2015



Okalik Eegeesiak of Nunavut is chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council. Photo by Ben Matheson / KYUK.

Alaska and the future of Arctic policy are seeing increased international attention as the U.S. holds the chairmanship for the Arctic Council and foreign ministers prepare to meet in Anchorage later this month—joined by President Obama, who’s planning a visit to Kotzebue and Dillingham.

Bethel has seen international leaders on hand last week as the Inuit Circumpolar Council executive council met to plan their next few years of work. Jim Stotts of Barrow is President of ICC-Alaska. He says the indigenous perspective needs to be heard at the high level meetings.

“I don’t think anything can really happen in the arctic without the involvement of the Inuit, the people who are living particularly along the coast, on the arctic coast of North America. We’re the ones who have lived here the longest, who know the most about it. If we’re not included in discussions about the arctic, they’re incomplete discussion as far as I’m concerned,” said Stotts.

The ICC represents indigenous people from Arctic nations. They consult with the United Nations and are a permanent participant to [the Arctic Council](#).

ICC’s goals aim well beyond the president’s visit, with summits on economic development, wildlife management, and education planned for the next few years. Officials say they want to strengthen the ICC’s role within the international sphere.

ICC Chair Okalik Eegeesiak from Nunavut, Canada says another priority that doesn’t see as much publicity is mental health in the Arctic. While there are many efforts going to suicide prevention, she says it’s not enough.

“..but there is no work about post-suicide, and the families that are left behind, and the support system they need. So we want to build those resources up at the community level,” said Eegeesiak.

Vice Chair Hjalmar Dahl is ICC president for Greenland. He emphasized that indigenous leaders need to reach out to all generations across the north and connect them with those that have common goals and interests.

“We are not isolated. We are part of the global community. It’s important for us also to get the youth to gain the knowledge of our work in that area. And that the youth be interested also,” said Dahl.

The executive council took a trip to the nearby village of Oscarville to see a pilot project for coordinated and collaborative community development.

Direct Link: <http://www.alaskapublic.org/2015/08/24/as-national-media-hone-on-alaska-icc-plots-its-course/>

Out West, Young Marine Meets Native American Veterans of World War II

Member of youth group participates in Navajo Code Talkers Day.

By [Chris Gaudet \(Patch Staff\)](#) August 24, 2015



Image: A group photo from the 2014 Navajo Code Talkers Day in Window Rock, Ariz.

A member of the Manassas chapter of the Young Marines, a national youth organization, recently journeyed to Arizona to see a unique part of American history.

Gavin Cornell, 15, a student at Riverbend High School in Spotsylvania County, participated in Navajo Code Talkers Day, an event in Window Rock, Ariz., to honor Native Americans who played a unique role in World War II. The Code Talkers are members of the Navajo tribe who served with the U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific and developed an unbreakable battlefield radio code, based on the Navajo language, that helped the Marines win battle after battle against the Japanese.

The Young Marines is a national non-profit education and service program for boys and girls, ages 8 through the completion of high school. It promotes the mental, moral and physical development of its members, focusing on teaching the values of leadership, teamwork and self-discipline so its members can live and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle, [according to the Young Marines' website](#).

Since its start in 1959, the Young Marines has grown to more than 300 units with 11,000 youth and 3,000 adult volunteers in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Germany, Japan and affiliates in several other countries.

Gavin said he joined the Young Marines five years ago because he was looking for activities that would help him get into college. He started out with the Fredericksburg chapter of the Young Marines, but recently switched to the Manassas chapter, which meets at the local American Legion hall.

The Manassas chapter, with 30 members, meets on Sundays and performs drills and community service projects, focusing on helping veterans and on DDR, or drug demand reduction. They also participate in summer camps, or “spaces” in Young Marines jargon.

Gavin said he was drawn to the Code Talkers event because “I’m a huge history buff,” and he’s always been interested in World War II. The event gave him a chance “to talk to people who were actually there,” and to learn about Navajo culture.

“A lot of these guys are getting old,” he said, and in the future, he would not have a chance to talk to them.

At Navajo Code Talkers Day, on Aug. 14, Gavin and about 175 other Young Marines from across the country participated in a ceremony at the Navajo Reservation in Arizona to honor the Code Talkers. They also set up flags for the event and marched in the Navajo Nation parade, according to a news release from the Young Marines.

The previous day, Gavin and the other Young Marines performed a community service project, attended a class about the Code Talkers and met with one of them. And on Aug. 15, they participated in a memorial 5K run/walk and visited the Navajo Museum.

As with all veterans of World War II, the ranks of the Code Talkers are thinning as the years go by. They are in their 80s and 90s, and for decades, their spoken military code remained top secret.

But today, the Navajo Code Talkers Foundation, a nonprofit group, is working to educate the public about these unique World War II Marines. The foundation also is raising funds and seeking corporate sponsorships for the National Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans’ Center. [For more information, please click here.](#)

Direct Link: <http://patch.com/virginia/manassas/out-west-young-marine-meets-native-american-vets-world-war-ii-0>

Crime Program Aims To Close Trust Gap Between Government, Tribes

August 25, 2015 5:03 AM ET

[Carrie Johnson](#)



Last October, a 15-year-old student and member of the Tulalip Tribes in Washington opened fire at his high school with a gun obtained from his father. The tribe had issued a restraining order against the father, but that information didn't show up in the federal criminal database — so he was able to buy the gun.



"We live in an information age right now, but unfortunately some of our communities don't have access to the information they need to keep their communities safe," said Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates.

The Justice Department is trying to make it easier for Native American tribes to gain access to national crime databases. Federal authorities say the program could prevent criminals from buying guns and help keep battered women and foster children safe.

The issue of who can see information in federal criminal databases might sound boring, until one considers a deadly shooting at a high school in Washington state last year.

Deputy U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates recalled the case, "where a 15-year-old boy got access to a gun that his father should not have been able to purchase had the information been available at the time."

A court connected to the Tulalip Tribes had issued a restraining order against the boy's father for domestic violence. But that information never showed up in the federal criminal database, leaving the man free to purchase a gun.

The boy used that same gun to kill four classmates and himself. His father now faces criminal charges.

"We live in an information age right now," Yates said, "but unfortunately some of our communities don't have access to the information that they really need to keep their communities safe."

Under the Justice Department pilot program, 10 tribal communities will get their own hardware and training, so they don't need to rely on local authorities.

John Dossett, general counsel of the National Congress of American Indians, said that matters.

"The states have been, you know, some of them are good to work with, some of them don't work with tribes," he said, "so it's been an issue that's been going on for a long time."

Dossett pointed out that tribes have been pressing the federal government to open up the criminal databases for 10 years. And Congress has made it a priority, too.

He added that tribes are watching now to make sure the Justice Department program will be a continuing effort, one that will expand all over the country.

"We're in a trust-but-verify situation," Dossett said.

Yates, the second in command at the Justice Department, said she understands the trust deficit.

In 2011, she traveled along with other federal officials to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

"It really had a profound personal impact on me," she said. "You know, I saw people who were living in very challenging circumstances, and we're their Justice Department, too. We have an obligation to earn their trust and to do everything we can to make their communities as safe as possible."

This week, Yates will head to Colorado to meet with tribal leaders, law enforcement and students on public safety.

Direct Link: <http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/08/25/434381921/pilot-program-aims-to-close-trust-gap-between-government-native-tribes>

Junípero Serra's missions destroyed entire native cultures--now he's going to be a saint

Gary Kamiya, San Francisco Magazine

Updated 10:59 am, Tuesday, August 25, 2015



In this January 30, 2015 file photo, a statue of Father Junipero Serra, founder of Californias missions and a controversial figure for his role in a process that began the decimation of the Native American population, stands in Statuary Hall in the US Capitol in Washington, DC. Pope Francis announced January 29, 2015, his plans to canonize Serra in September 2015 during his scheduled visit the US. AFP PHOTO/JIM WATSON/JIM WATSON/AFP/Getty Images

It's a warm fall day outside Mission Dolores, where an Ohlone man whose baptismal name is Francisco is tied to a whipping post. A week ago he ran away to the village where he grew up, but the soldiers hunted him down and brought him back in chains. A priest has gathered the other Indians at the mission to witness Francisco's punishment. "Remember that this is for your own good, my children," he says as he raises the leather

whip. "The devil may tempt you to run away. But you must fight off temptation to gain eternal life." He brings down the whip on Francisco's bare back. After applying 25 lashes, he drops the whip, bows his head, and says a prayer.

This is not a side of mission life that's taught in the fourth grade. But scenes like this took place at every one of the 21 missions in the chain begun in 1769 by a diminutive Franciscan friar named Junípero Serra. Every schoolchild knows that California Indians at Serra's missions were taught the Gospel, fed, and clothed; few know that many were also whipped, imprisoned, and put in stocks. Junípero Serra's pious hope to convert pagan Indians into Catholic Spaniards resulted not only in the physical punishment of countless Indians, but in the death of tens of thousands of them—and, ultimately, in the eradication of their culture. So it was understandable that when Pope Francis announced plans to canonize Junípero Serra in January, some California Indians felt, at least figuratively, as if they were being whipped by a priest again.

"I felt betrayed," says Louise Miranda Ramirez, tribal chairwoman of the Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation, whose people occupied large parts of northern California at the time of Serra's arrival in 1769. "The missions that Serra founded put our ancestors through things that none of us want to remember. I think about the children being locked into the missions, the whippings—and it hurts. I hurt for our ancestors. I feel the pain. That pain hasn't gone away. And it needs to be corrected.

But the pain is not being corrected. In fact, say many Native American leaders, it's being exacerbated. Since the announcement of the pope's plan, Indians across California have risen up in protest. On Easter, representatives of the Ohlone, Amah Mutsun, Chumash, and Mono peoples gathered at Serra's home mission in Carmel, San Carlos Borromeo, to denounce the canonization. Protests have also been held at Mission Dolores in San Francisco, Mission Santa Barbara, and Mission San Juan Bautista. When Francis canonizes Serra in Washington, D.C., on September 23, more demonstrations will likely take place (though the actions of a pope—who is infallible by definition—are not subject to any trappings of democracy, least of all public protests).

The conflict juxtaposes two radically different perceptions of the soon-to-be saint. In one, he is a selfless "evangelizer of the West," as Francis called Serra when he announced the canonization: a man who forfeited his worldly possessions and traveled to the ends of the earth to save souls. In the other, he is a zealous servant of the Inquisition and agent of colonialism whose coercive missions destroyed the indigenous peoples who encountered them. These two versions of history not only force us to ponder whether a man who carries a mule train's worth of toxic historical baggage should be declared a saint, but also raise difficult questions about Latino identity and the founding myths of the United States—because there is a political dimension to Francis's choice: Well aware that Latinos are now the largest ethnic group in California and constitute a third of American Catholics, the Catholic church is making much of the fact that Serra will be America's first Hispanic saint. His canonization may indeed promote greater acceptance of Latino Americans, especially immigrants, and challenge the Anglocentric creation myth that starts American history with Plymouth Rock. But it's far from clear whether Serra can, or

should, serve as an exemplar for Latinos. And the church's attempt to weave Spain into the nation's DNA raises as many questions as it answers.

In short, Francis kicked an enormous historical, theological, and ethical hornet's nest when he made his announcement. Whether he did so wittingly or not, only he knows. But the dustup about Serra's canonization gives California, and the nation, an opportunity to learn a lot more about California's deeply tragic Spanish and colonialist origins than most ever knew before.

If any two people embody the contradictions and complexities of the Serra controversy, they're Andrew Galvan and Vincent Medina. Galvan, 60, a curator at San Francisco's Mission Dolores, is a descendant of Ohlone, Coast and Bay Miwok, and Patwin tribal groups; like many California Indians, he also has Mexican ancestry and is a devout Catholic, but unlike most, he emphatically supports the Serra canonization, or "cause" in church nomenclature. Medina, Galvan's 28-year-old cousin, is a fellow curator at Mission Dolores and another devout Catholic—but also a staunch and vocal opponent of Serra's cause.

I meet with Galvan and Medina in Fremont at Mission San Jose, which Galvan proudly tells me his ancestors helped build. A loquacious man with a neatly trimmed beard, wearing a thick necklace of Indian beads, he is as effusive as Medina is reserved and soft-spoken. Sitting on a pew inside the reconstructed mission, near a baptismal font where his great-greatgreat- grandmother was baptized in 1815, Galvan explains the roots of his love of Serra. "My family home is across the street. My parents were both devout Catholics, and on summer vacation, our hobby was to visit California missions. I can remember the family asking, 'What mission haven't we been to yet?'"

Paradoxically, Galvan goes on to describe the mission system as a monstrosity: "In California schools, the fourth-grade kids make papier-mâché or sugar-cube missions. But they're never asked to build a slave plantation or a concentration camp with incinerators." Given his equation of the missions with such hideous institutions, why does he support canonizing the Father-President of the missions, who could be seen as the Spanish colonialist equivalent of Heinrich Himmler?

Direct Link: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/un-pero-Serra-s-missions-destroyed-entire-6462664.php>

Native American journalists face unique issues when it comes to free press

Written by [Holly Kays](#), Wednesday, 26 August 2015 14:41



Joe Martin had never worked for a newspaper or owned a handgun when he took the reins of the tribally owned Cherokee One Feather in 1995.

But when the first changed, so did the second. Then a 26-year-old whose only job experience since graduation from college was as a cage cashier at the casino, Martin found himself fast-tracked to a steep, steep learning curve.

“I’ve gotten death threats here and there,” he said. “I don’t know how many times I’ve had somebody say they were going to go to the chief or council and make sure that I got fired.”

Eventually, he did get fired. Martin hasn’t worked for The One Feather since 2007.

He started to stir up controversy well before then, however. An Auburn University grad in public relations and journalism, Martin was hired by former Principal Chief Joyce Dugan with strict instructions to act like a journalist. Soon after his hire, he drew criticism for a piece he wrote about a former chief’s lawsuit against the tribe. Then, Martin wrote an editorial that he characterizes as “in the vein of Jonathan Swift,” which satirically suggested solving a controversy surrounding Harley rallies by kicking out the bikes. That angered a good many business owners. Then there was the “routine” cops and courts reporting that becomes more complicated in a close-knit community where ties of blood and friendship are thick.

“I heard from plenty who felt I should not be printing things like their sons raping an 11-year-old girl,” Martin said.

But the stage for the events that led to Martin’s termination wasn’t really set until 2003, when the newly elected Principal Chief Michell Hicks reorganized the newspaper to become part of the marketing and promotions department. That’s when a new column called Rants and Raves appeared in the paper — a development that Martin said was the suggestion of his boss, the marketing and promotions director at the time. The column printed tribal members’ anonymous comments on whatever was happening around Cherokee, and it became immensely popular.

Martin says he wasn't a fan of the idea, because he believes that if someone wants to publicize an opinion they should be willing to sign their name to it. However, in retrospect he can see that Rants and Raves turned out to be incredibly valuable.

"It turned out to be probably the best thing that ever happened to that paper, because for one it got people to comment," Martin said. "People were afraid to criticize Tribal Council and the chief because they feared retaliation, and all of a sudden there's this forum where they can do that."

As it turned out, many of the called-in comments were less-than-favorable toward Hicks, who in September of 2007 was elected to a second term. After the election, he issued an executive order to end the Rants and Raves column.

The final straw came when Martin criticized Hicks' action in the Asheville Citizen-Times.

"Following that column coming out, I get this notice that I'm going to be transferred out of the paper to this job that looked like it was just made up on the spot," Martin recalled.

The job was manager of Dora Reed Children's Center, the tribal daycare. Martin had no work experience in that field. At the time, he wasn't even a father.

"I knew what it was," Martin said. "I talked to my lawyer, and he said basically to make them fire me."

Martin filed a wrongful termination suit against the tribe, eventually settling. He cited lack of confidence in getting a fair trial as reason for not going through the whole process. Martin tried starting an independent paper soon after things fell apart at The One Feather, but the timing was all wrong — it was 2008, and his start-up publication was just one of many victims of the recession. Since then, he's done some other newspaper work and for a time reported for The Cherokee Scout, but today, he's a stay-at-home father of one — with a second on the way — enjoying a quieter life than he had as editor of The One Feather.

"Kids give you enough gray hair," he joked.

Cherokee and the First Amendment

While it might not be hard to believe that a person about whom less-than-flattering words are being written would want to keep undesirable press at bay, what's harder to understand is exactly how a journalist at a newspaper in North Carolina could be fired for doing what any newspaper editor in any state in this nation would be perfectly within his rights to do.

The question is complicated by the fact that, while Cherokee is geographically located in North Carolina, it's not actually part of the state. Like all other federally recognized

Native American tribes, The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is a sovereign nation. That means that it makes and enforces its own laws, so the fact that the Constitution of the United States of America guarantees all citizens the right to a free press and free speech doesn't have any bearing on how things work on the Qualla Boundary.

All that would explain why Martin's story was able to play out like it did if not for the fact that Cherokee does, in fact, have laws on the books that mirror the language in the First Amendment.

The Free Press Act of 2006 — notably, the year before Martin left *The One Feather* — states that it is “imperative” to ensure that “tribal publications have the autonomy and independence to report honestly and objectively.” It references the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' adoption of the Federal Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, which states that no Indian tribe shall make laws that, among other things, “abridge the freedom of speech, or of the press.” It establishes *The One Feather* as the tribe's newspaper and asserts that Cherokee's press should be “independent from any undue influence and free of any particular political interest.” The press should “report without bias the activities of the tribe, the tribal government, and any and all news of interest to have informed citizens.”

All of that sounds pretty black-and-white. It would be unheard of for a reporter at any American newspaper protected by the identical First Amendment right to free speech to be fired or kicked out of a meeting or denied access to records just because somebody in the government didn't like what they were reporting.

So why are things different in Cherokee? And how does the situation there compare with that of the hundreds of other federally recognized tribes in the United States?

The source of conflict

In the world of media, newspapers covering Native American lands are curious creatures. They exist to serve a population of people, usually in a low-population-density area, united by their heritage as much as by their mailing address. The result is a rather limited pool of readers, and it's often difficult or impossible for a newspaper serving such a population to stay afloat through the traditional means of subscriptions and advertising.

“Most of the time it's actually the tribe itself — the government — that is subsidizing the operation of the newspaper,” explained Bryan Pollard, vice president of the Native American Journalists Association and editor of *The Cherokee Phoenix* in Oklahoma. “You can see the inherent conflict there.”

In this situation, the tribe recognizes the value of having a community newspaper but realizes that such a business would fold pretty quickly if left to market forces. So, the tribe foots the bill for the publication, ensuring financial stability but creating a situation in which the very organization the newspaper is tasked with watchdogging is the one cutting its employees' checks and holding ultimate sway over hire/fire decisions.

“If you have a government that’s funding the media, then many times you will have elected officials that believe that they should have a say in what is and is not published,” Pollard said.

There are ways to guard against that. A common tactic is to establish an editorial board that acts as a buffer between the newspaper’s employees and tribal executives. This board should have the power to set editorial policies and hold hire-fire power over the newspaper editor; in effect, the board should do the job that a publisher would do at a typical newspaper.

That’s close to how things are set up in Oklahoma’s Cherokee Nation, which Pollard’s newspaper — the first Native American-owned paper in the country, which was first published in north Georgia in 1828 — covers. The five-member editorial board is made up mainly of appointees of the chief and tribal council, three of whom must have experience in publications, while the other two must have business management experience. The board sets policies surrounding editorial content and advertising, and if the editor’s job becomes open — editors can be fired only for cause — it recommends a replacement for the principal chief to approve.

“For the most part I have felt free to publish whatever stories we feel like we needed to publish, including stories that are critical of the government, and we have done that,” said Pollard, who has held his post for nearly nine years.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians also has an editorial board, and much of the language in the ordinance establishing it is identical to that in the Cherokee Nation ordinance. But differences exist, and the differences are significant.

For instance, the Eastern Band ordinance doesn’t stipulate qualifications for editorial board members. Pollard believes it’s vital that board members be required to have some kind of experience managing a newspaper.

“If you have an editorial board and you put your brother Jeff on it who doesn’t have a lick of journalistic experience, well guess what? You’re probably not going to get real strong independence out of him,” Pollard said.

But in choosing a board, the Cherokee Nation has a lot more people to choose from than the Eastern Band. About 100,000 enrolled Cherokee Nation members live in Oklahoma, with about 330,000 enrolled members total. Compare that to somewhere around 15,000 enrolled members of the Eastern Band. Which begets the question: if the law were changed to require board members to have journalistic experience, would it even be possible to fill all the seats?

“I think it would be a stretch to find a tribal member who would also be a journalist and serve on it,” said Martin.

There are other options, though, Pollard pointed out. What if all board members weren't enrolled in the Eastern Band?

"I think if they're going to have a serious, independent board, then having someone with a strong sense of ethics is more important than necessarily having a citizen," he said. "They could just open it up to all Cherokees, because there's three Cherokee tribes and between the three tribes there's plenty of experienced journalists."

So who is on The One Feather's editorial board now?

The answer to that question points to another one of Pollard's major concerns with the Eastern Band's free press law. The editorial board is simply made up of The One Feather staff members and the tribe's director of marketing and communications — that person is the editor's boss.

"That seems like a very obvious conflict to me, because then you have people who may fear for their jobs also setting the editorial direction of the paper," Pollard said. "To me, that's just asking for political influence."

An old story

It would be hard to find somebody with more stories to tell about life as a Native American journalist than Tim Giago. A member of the Oglala Lakota tribe in South Dakota, Giago got his start with the Rapid City Journal before leaving to launch his own paper, The Lakota Times, to cover his native Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. His professional accomplishments have been many, among them founding the Native American Journalists Association, on whose board Pollard serves.

Upon hearing about The Smoky Mountain News' troubles gaining access to Cherokee Tribal Council meetings — SMN is required to request approval each time it attends a meeting and has been kicked out of two of them, once with a police escort — he just laughed.

"That sounds like an old story to me," Giago said. "I've been thrown out of Tribal Council meetings many times too."

That's not the most formidable challenge that the 81-year-old faced in his decades as a journalist.

"I had my windows shot out three times. The newspaper was firebombed in December of '82," Giago, now retired, recalled from his home in South Dakota. "I came out of my car to go to work one evening and they shot a bullet right through my windshield and just past my head. So yeah, we had some hazardous times back in those days."

All that, and Giago's newspaper wasn't even tribally owned. The whole reason he'd started it was because "I knew if I had a tribal newspaper I'd never be able to write some

of the strong editorials and be critical of the tribal government as I have for the past 34 years,” he said.

So why, even with legislation in place guaranteeing freedom of the press and without the inherent conflict of interest that arises when the watchdog of the government is owned by the government, did Giago face so many challenges as a journalist?

“It all comes down to leadership,” he said.

During the decades he’s worked in journalism, Giago’s dealt with chiefs who were hostile to free press and opposed him at every turn. He’s also worked with leaders who recognized its value. After his building was firebombed in the 1980s, for example, the tribal president at the time called a special meeting of Tribal Council to declare that any attack on Giago’s paper would be considered an attack on the tribe.

Each tribe is unique in its governmental structure, its network of laws and policies, but in nearly all cases it’s true that the tribal leadership has tremendous influence over how business is carried out, which laws are enforced and which laws are ignored.

Speculation on the future

When it comes to free press — giving the newspaper license to print whatever it wants — that power structure can cause issues.

“You’re asking them to relinquish that control,” Pollard said. “I could sincerely understand a reluctance to do that, and I think that’s when it really becomes incumbent upon the people of the tribe to express their desire to their elected officials to take real action when it comes to enacting a free press.”

“When a group of citizens organizes and they represent a certain number of people, a funny thing happens,” Pollard continued. “Elected officials suddenly start paying attention. Regardless of what laws are currently on the books, if the Eastern Band citizens do not feel like they have a free press, then they need to make their voice heard through action. They need to push the issue. They need to make it clear to elected officials that’s something that they value.”

Giago is a bit less optimistic about the likelihood that leaders used to complete power would give up that privilege. He sees the next generation as the greatest hope for developing a free press and advocates for an increased emphasis on educating children about the importance of a free press and involved citizenry. Some of those children, he reasons, will then grow up to become leaders who value free press and citizens who demand it.

“That’s the only way things are going to change,” he said.

Pollard disagrees, arguing that there's room for things to change now if people speak out and demand that their leaders honor those First Amendment-style rights.

"I wouldn't go so far as to say you give up on us old guys," he said. "There are a lot of mature journalists in Indian country. We want to do good, independent reporting and we understand the value of it, but we're not all in the same situation. Some of us, like me, have more freedom, but there are others who — they just don't."

Issues with enforcement

For the Eastern Band, part of the issue stems from how the law is enforced — or at least how it's perceived to be enforced.

In Cherokee, laws are passed by the elected Tribal Council. They are carried out by the principal and vice chiefs, also elected. But disputes are adjudicated by the Cherokee Tribal Court, whose judges are appointed by the principal chief with confirmation by Tribal Council. The principal chief also has ultimate hire/fire power over all other tribal employees, the tribal government being by far the biggest employer on the Qualla Boundary.

Fear of conflict of interest on the judge's part, Martin said, was a significant factor in his decision to settle on his wrongful termination case after he left The One Feather. He said he didn't feel like Chief Hicks would have allowed the judge to make a fair decision.

Bill Boyum, Tribal Supreme Court Chief Justice, didn't work for Cherokee's court system when Martin's case was filed and said he hasn't dealt with a freedom of the press suit before in Cherokee. But he believes that the court system now has a much deeper bench of experienced judges — some of whom live in the community and some of whom do not, allowing for a more detached decision when conflict of interest is a concern — and is of at least equal in quality to the state court.

"The number of years of experience is four times what it was eight years ago," he said.

However, he concedes that Tribal Court is still working to overcome a sometimes negative perception.

"In reality, perception overshadows reality sometimes," he said.

There's another issue, too — tribal immunity. If someone felt like the State of North Carolina, for example, had violated her rights in some way, that person would be able to sue the state. Not so in Cherokee. Though it can choose to waive that right, by default the Eastern Band is immune from lawsuit. So, even if a tribal member felt like her government was not honoring the law as written, she would not necessarily be able to sue the government she believed to be violating her rights.

“The tribe can always amend its laws and waive sovereignty that the Cherokees have to a small degree,” said Rob Saunooke, the attorney who represented Martin during his lawsuit.

But as far as a wholesale waiver that would allow someone to file a lawsuit whenever they felt the urge? That’s a bit trickier, said Saunooke, an enrolled member who now lives in Florida.

“The fear is if we waive sovereign immunity, Indians will benefit from it but so will non-Indians,” he said.

Family, community and the news

Indian tribes are different from other newspaper coverage areas in that they’re not just another county, another town, separated from the neighbors by arbitrarily drawn political lines. Indian tribes are their own nations, pockets of culture thousands of years old. On the Qualla Boundary, for example, everybody who’s enrolled traces ancestry back to someone whose name is on the 1924 Baker Roll, a census of the Eastern Band of Cherokee people alive at the time. Many enrolled members are related to each other through some tie of marriage or birth from the last 100 years — it’s a community of blood, as well as geography.

That can further complicate things when it comes to reporting the news.

“Me and my brother grew up and we beat each other up every single day, but don’t you dare let someone else jump on him,” said Councilmember Brandon Jones by way of explaining the dynamic.

“We can fuss and fight and not get along, but then when something happens and there’s an outside opinion versus the Eastern Band, we all come together.”

On the one hand, people deserve to know what their government is up to. But would you want to publish your family secrets for anyone to read? For many in Cherokee, that’s a hangup when it comes to endorsing a free press — does giving media free rein equate to exposing what is the equivalent of family business for public consumption?

“We all have to live in the same community,” Jones said. “We live together, we work together. It’s a tough lifestyle. It’s different than most communities for a lot of cultural reasons.”

But by the same token, when there’s something to talk about, people will talk. In lieu of a newspaper able to do investigative reporting, some tribal members have turned to Facebook as a forum to voice their opinions. Pages like Cherokee Rants and Raves and the closed group Tsa-La-Gi Voice have provided a place for Cherokee people to swap rumors, share thoughts, post government documents and generally connect on the issues they care about.

One chorus that's resounding in these forums is overall dissatisfaction with The One Feather. It's accused of being a voicebox for the chief, a happy-news-only paper. Read through the opinion pages, and you'll be hard-pressed to find a letter to the editor whose headline doesn't contain the words "thank you" or an editorial that wrangles with some recent decision of Tribal Council or action of a tribal executive.

When Tribal Council passed itself a hefty raise last year — effective immediately, though many pointed to a section of the tribe's Charter and Governing Document that states raises for council can't go into effect until after the next election — no headline popped up in The One Feather. Not when the budget containing the raises was adopted in October, or when the issue prompted lengthy debate in council chambers during the November and December meetings, or when a coalition of tribal members threatened councilmembers with a lawsuit in April.

However, it's perhaps not fair to say that The One Feather isn't making an effort. For example, during the 2011 chiefs election, not one front page in the month leading up to the election mentioned the race, unless you count a reminder on the Sept. 1 cover to go vote. Contrast that with this year's Aug. 13 cover, which features a large headline about the chief and vice chief debates The One Feather hosted with the Junaluska Leadership Council — the questions asked there could not be classified as softball — and an article detailing Tribal Council candidates' platforms and summaries of the most recent Tribal Council and budget council sessions.

Moving on

Recent issues aside, Cherokee's overall track record with regard to free press is anything but a cautionary tale. Cherokee is the only Native American language to have a written language, and the Cherokee Phoenix, of which Pollard is editor, was the first newspaper in the United States to be published by Native Americans.

"Cherokee history will reflect that journalism is important to our people," Councilmember Teresa McCoy said during the Aug. 6 Tribal Council meeting as councilmembers debated whether to allow The Smoky Mountain News to sit in the council chambers. "Knowledge and education and the right for us to inform ourselves about our government have existed for millennia."

McCoy, who sponsored the Eastern Band's Free Press Act of 2006, has long been a supporter of a free press and allowing non-tribal media access to government affairs.

"Free press is what it is," she said at the same meeting. "It can be the best friend or the worst nightmare to an elected person. But people deserve to get the news, decide what they think and move on."

For Pollard, the moving on is key. His newspaper writes about the government, sometimes critically, but that's not all the Phoenix does. The paper includes stories about Cherokee artists, entrepreneurs, culture, language — the kinds of stories that readers have

expressed a desire to read. Because the newspaper isn't focused so much on the tug-of-war between government desires and journalistic ethics, Pollard said, staff can focus more energy on stories that show the soul of the Cherokee people.

"One of the greatest misdeeds of a tribal press that's being controlled by the government is that it forces the members of that tribal media to turn their ear only to the elected officials, and they turn it away from their people," Pollard said. "When you're free to report in a way that is truly independent, then you naturally turn your ear toward your people, toward your leaders. You are able to listen to what they want, the stories that they would like to see, and that guides your reporting."

When a newspaper is free to practice journalism, another thing happens, as well, Giago said. That newspaper gains respect in the wider community and can advocate for the tribe it covers.

"You have to have a newspaper that can stand up for something, and a lot of the tribal newspapers don't," he said. Instead, they're just concerned about where the line is, if they're about to cross it and what might happen to their job if they do.

One of Giago's proudest accomplishments is convincing the state of South Dakota to get rid of Columbus Day, an October holiday honoring the Italian explorer who stumbled upon Central America in his quest for India — enslaving and killing many Native Americans along the way.

"My newspaper challenged the government of South Dakota to do away with Columbus Day and replace it with Native American Day," he said. "It went before the legislators, and now South Dakota is the only state in the nation that celebrates Native American Day. And it was my little newspaper that did it."

The road to free press is an evolution. There have to be people who demand it, a leadership that will allow it to take hold and the growth of expectation among readers — tribal members — that access to information is a right.

That happens one voice at a time, one word at a time, one ballot at a time.

"People have much more power than they give themselves credit for," Pollard said.

(Current One Feather editor Robert Jumper expressed interest in commenting on this story, but a request for permission to interview that he submitted to his superior more than a week before deadline was not returned. A request for interview sent to Principal Chief Michell Hicks' office was not returned.)

Direct Link: <http://www.smokymountainnews.com/news/item/16265-native-american-journalists-face-unique-issues-when-it-comes-to-free-press>

Native American artist gives white people a taste of their own mascots

by [Jorge Rivas](#) | [August 26, 2015](#) 8:16 a.m.
Matthew Bearden

The owner of Washington D.C.'s football team has been fighting to keep the trademark to his team's name and mascot [for decades now](#). Even President Obama has said he would consider [changing](#) the team's name, which some Native Americans say is offensive.

Now an artist from Oklahoma has come up with his own way to get people to consider how Native Americans feel when they see depictions of themselves as baseball or football team mascots.



Citizen Potawatomi artist Matthew Bearden, of Tulsa, hand painted his grandfather Johnny Bruno (left) on to a football helmet. On the right, he's painted Pope Benedict on to a helmet.

In an ongoing series he calls "Sacred Mascot," artist Matthew Bearden says he's trying to open people's eyes by hand-painting respected figures, like former Pope Benedict, on football helmets.

"The intention isn't to offend Catholics or the Catholic Church. But if the Catholics are offended, maybe they can see the Native perspective and where we're coming from," said Bearden, a Citizen Potawatomi Nation member, in a telephone interview Tuesday.

"The clothing the Pope wears is holy, same as chiefs who have to earn the right to wear a feather," said Bearden, speaking from his home in Tulsa. "I wanted to talk about it in a way where I didn't get it in people's face," he said.



As part of the series, Bearden has also painted his grandfather, and Patrick Swayze in character from the film *The Outsiders*, which was filmed in Tulsa. He also has more politically minded images of Native Americans. The Pope was the first helmet in the series.

It's not just NFL teams that have built a brand around images of Native Americans. Cleveland's Major League Baseball team goes by the "Indians" and its logo depicts a smiling cartoon character sporting a feather and red skin. As Bearden notes, many tribes consider feathers to symbolize trust, honor, wisdom, or power.



Matthew Bearden's 'Darrel Curtis' depicts Patrick Swayze in the film 'The Outsiders' which was shot on location in Tulsa.

Bearden, who said he is in his 40s, has been around Native American mascots from an early age. He went to a high school in Hominy, a city in the Osage Nation that actually

has a “buck Indian” mascot. But Bearden says the mascot was illustrated respectfully and he’s not offended by it.

“Some mascots are connected to their heritage. I can’t speak for everyone but the ones in Hominy have a sense of pride,” Bearden said.



The *Sacred Mascot* series has been a huge success for Bearden. He’s been traveling across the country to Native American art festivals to sell his work, and recently he had to cancel an engagement because he sold out of his work.

“I’ve got a ton of helmets in the garage. This could be neverending,” Bearden said.

Direct Link: <http://fusion.net/story/188747/native-american-mascot-helmet-art/>

How Hillary Clinton's Campaign Is Making Its Play for Native American Support

The campaign’s “no-stone-unturned” philosophy recently took a team of organizers to a Native American reservation.

By [Emily Schultheis](#)



August 27, 2015 SCHURZ, Nev.—The three organizers from the Clinton campaign had traveled all the way to this small town nestled between jagged mountains and broad plains in ultra-rural Mineral County, more than 350 miles from Las Vegas and 100 miles from Reno, to meet with five people on a Native American reservation.

With a small circle of folding chairs in the Walker River Paiute Reservation's Agai-Dicutta ("Trout Eaters" in the Paiute language) Community Center, the room was set up like any other organizing meeting: Handwritten posters hung on the wall, waiting to be filled in, featured prompts like "I support Hillary because..." and "These are the issues that are important to me..." But there were two others that don't often appear in campaign organizing materials: "I know for a fact that the Indian vote can sway a statewide election." And: "I caucus/I vote because I know the power of the native vote."

There's little payoff for the Clinton campaign to spend its time in such a far-flung part of the state. From a dollar-per-caucus-goer perspective, the campaign could score a broader audience in Nevada's urban centers. But meetings like these are part of the hyper-granular organizing strategy helmed by Clinton's national campaign manager, Robby Mook, and a real-life manifestation of the campaign's unrelenting motto of 2016: flood the early states with field organizers in order to leave no stone unturned and no potential Democratic voter untouched.

The visit to Schurz was the campaign's eighth Native American outreach event of the summer in Nevada—which is also the state where Mook got his start, directing Clinton's 2008 operation here. Some of the meetings have been with tribal leaders, like a presentation to the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada or one to the Nevada Tribal Youth in early August. And when the Nevada team launched its "Every Nevadan" statewide rural tour in July, the itinerary included stops here in Schurz and also one with the Te-Moak Tribe in Elko.

Jaynie Parrish, a Reno-based organizer for the campaign who's also a member of the Navajo tribe from Arizona, has been a crucial part of the efforts in Nevada's Indian Country. "[Clinton] is, I think, pretty well-rounded in tribal issues," Parrish said as she

opened the meeting, pointing to Clinton's visits to Native American reservations as first lady and her campaign events in 2008.

The tribal members present were skeptical—of Clinton, and of politicians in general. Despite President Obama's status in Indian Country as one of the most engaged presidents in recent history—he holds an annual meeting with tribal leaders at the White House and has made [several visits](#) to reservations since he took office—the Walker River Paiutes said they feel presidential candidates always overpromise and under-deliver for their communities once they take office, on issues as wide-ranging as access to health care and voting rights and education.

Native Americans face proportionately higher rates of poverty and unemployment than the U.S. population at large, and have lower life expectancies: Almost a quarter of Native American families were living below the poverty line in 2010, according to the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), and [current statistics](#) put the Native American unemployment rate at above 10 percent in 2013. The group's life expectancy is a full 4.2 years less than that of the overall U.S. population, according to data from the federal government's [Indian Health Service](#).

Professed interest in native issues is "a bone that keeps getting thrown at us" by politicians, said Myron Dewey, one of the tribal members at the meeting. "We can't keep waiting for one of these presidents to hold up these promises. ... I want to know a little more about where she is before I put my energy and my support her way. I'd really like to see at a higher level of what she's doing for the tribes."

Parrish replied that Clinton's campaign hasn't yet released any in-depth policy proposals relating to Native Americans, but that meetings like these are what will drive and shape those policies throughout the campaign. "How is that going to happen if you don't hear directly from the people?" she said, taking notes in a black-and-white marbled notebook throughout the meeting.

Traditionally, the country's 5.2 million Native Americans vote overwhelmingly Democratic—but they also tend to be one of the lowest-turnout demographic groups, which is why the Native American vote is unlikely to play a decisive role in 2016 (either in the caucuses or the general election). That said, they've been a pivotal vote in a handful of elections: The most famous example is the 2002 Senate race in South Dakota, where Sen. Tim Johnson won reelection by just 524 votes, helped along by strong turnout and support from the state's native vote.

"Even though we're a small minority of the population ... we make key differences in key elections, especially when there is a tight race," said Jacqueline Pata, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians.

Census estimates from 2013 put the Native American population in Nevada at 1.6 percent of the state's total population, split up among 27 tribes (all either Paiute, Washoe, or Shoshone). The Walker River Paiute tribe—which chairman Bobby Sanchez said has

over 3,300 members, 600 to 700 of whom live on the reservation—has unusually strong turnout because they have a caucus precinct right on the reservation.

"People vote here," said Elveda Martinez, 56, a member of the tribe. "This is probably one of the biggest voting reservations in Nevada. ... There might not be anybody here, but we vote. We've won elections for people."

In the past, repeated outreach to Native American tribes has been minimal, largely because it's difficult to do and so rarely affects the outcome of an election. "To the extent you court them, it's really very hard," said Russ Lehman, a scholar who has researched the role of Native Americans in U.S. politics. "[Politicians] realize there's just not much payoff there."

That was different in 2008, when both Clinton and then-Sen. Obama [spent some time](#) meeting with tribal leaders and holding events on reservations—but that happened largely because the primary dragged on into states that normally don't play a role, like Montana and South Dakota. In May 2008, Clinton held a campaign event on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota, where she told the gathered tribal members: "I will be your champion." (Neither candidate came in person to Schurz in 2008, but tribal members here remember seeing both Clinton and Obama in neighboring Fallon, Nevada.)

PaaWee Rivera, the director of Native American engagement at the Democratic National Committee, said Obama's record on native issues has helped give Democrats strong support on reservations that will reverberate in future elections. "President Obama's attention to Indian Country has been unmatched by any president in recent history, and that's why Democrats will continue to earn support from native communities in 2016 and beyond," he said.

This year's Indian Country outreach indicates Clinton's team has learned an important lesson from 2008: Winning the delegate vote requires organizing in smaller and more rural parts of the state, not just the big population centers in Las Vegas and Reno. Eight years ago, Clinton won the caucuses in Nevada by five points—but Obama, whose campaign had done more to organize in rural areas, still won the overall delegate count here. That's clearly on the mind of Clinton organizers, who made it clear to the tribal members in Schurz how important they are.

"Here in Schurz ... you have the highest delegate count in the county, you guys are able to really have some sway here, and get some things heard," Parrish told the group, handing out charts showing the delegate counts for precincts in Mineral County. "So now ... let's put some action behind it."

Clinton's campaign is able to come to such small and often-forgotten parts of the state because of the sheer size of her Nevada-based staff: 22 between the Las Vegas and Reno offices, a number that's likely to grow between now and the caucuses next year. By comparison, no other Democratic campaign has staffers or organizers on the ground in the state at all.

Megan Jones, who served as then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's political director during his reelection campaign here in 2010, said the size of Clinton's Nevada operation gives her team the luxury of being able to organize outside of the two most populous counties. "Nevada's a small enough state where you can do that and still focus tremendous resources in Clark County and Washoe County [Las Vegas and Reno]," she said. "They've utilized the summer months here, where I think other campaigns took for granted that people are out of town, to do some great early organizing—and they have the staff to do it."

Eric Taylor, Clinton's regional field director for Northern Nevada, said the campaign would plan to be back in Schurz about once a month until the caucuses—starting with an organizing and training meeting for tribal members in September. "It's not a box we're checking off," he assured. "We will be back."

For their part, the Walker River Paiutes who showed up to the Clinton camp's meeting professed that they weren't completely sold yet. Martinez, who supported Obama in 2008, said she's also going to be taking a close look at Sen. Bernie Sanders. "I just see he's been getting a lot of big crowds—it kind of reminds me of Obama," she said.

But they're listening—and they're happy that a national campaign is taking the time to listen to them, too. Martinez, though, put it this way: "Hillary, if she wants our vote, she needs to come to Schurz."

Direct Link: <http://www.nationaljournal.com/2016-elections/how-hillary-clinton-s-campaign-is-making-its-play-for-native-american-support-20150827>

Lloyd Oxendine, Native American Arts Advocate, Walks On

[Alex Jacobs](#)

8/27/15

The resume of the late Lloyd Oxendine, who died on August 5, is extensive but people today in the internet age may not recognize his name or work, yet hundreds, if not thousands, of Native American artists owe him a debt for his groundbreaking work in promoting contemporary Native American Art. Lloyd was Lumbee from North Carolina, winning many local honors, his talent soon had him attending Columbia University in NYC in the early 1970's. During his graduate studies there he discovered that there was little information on Contemporary Native American Art. Oxendine did his research, brought it to Brian O'Doherty, editor of *Art in America* who published Lloyd's article, "23 American Indian Artists" and then published a special issue (*Art in America*: July/August 1972) devoted to Contemporary American Indian Art.

As important as his work was, even more important was the high regard in which his fellow Native Artists held him. It will always be a struggle, but somehow he made it a little easier for everyone, most times with advice and wisdom collected in 30 years of an artist's life in NYC. Manhattan may be the Art Center of the world but Lloyd made sure that everyone should and would find out about Native American Art. A 2013 art exhibit in NYC, *The Old Becomes the New*, recalls the overlooked dialogue and exchange between Indian Artists and New York abstract expressionists, some of whom claimed Indian heritage like Robert Rauschenberg and Leon Polk Smith. Smith would support Oxendine in starting up the city's first gallery of Native Art, the American Art Gallery in Soho in the early 70's.

The American Indian Community House at 7th and Broadway was the center for Indians living in NYC; it would also become a center for Native Art in the city and the east coast as Indians came to NYC to jumpstart a career in the arts. AICH had a gallery and over the years everyone contributed to the success of that humble space over time. The gallery became a highlight and a magnet as people were drawn to the art exhibits, and the evening poetry readings became a talked-about scene. The directors always had a hard time getting funding, as most funds went into AICH's health, welfare and jobs programs. Oxendine had closed his American Art Gallery, left for Europe and San Francisco, and then accepted the job of Gallery Director at AICH in 1985.

As Gallery Director at AICH, Lloyd curated over 40 exhibits with public lectures and educational components; his work at the American Art Gallery, past curatorial work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum, all came into play as he was successful in building the AICH Gallery's reputation. He had many guest lectureships at important institutions all over the country and sat as a judge for several national art and culture organizations who awarded grants to Indian Art organizations and individual artists.

Peter Jemison (the first AICH Gallery Director) is now director of [Ganondagan Historical Site and the new Seneca Center for Arts and Culture](#), speaking as an Iroquois orator, he said this about his friend Lloyd.

"A mentor, friend and fellow artist passed away August 5th 2015, he was Lloyd Oxendine, a Lumbee. First my condolences to Lloyd's family and particularly to his son Marc and Lloyd's mother. Lloyd was a graduate of Columbia University where he obtained a Master's Degree in art history. We worked together back in 1972 to promote contemporary Native American Art, it was a bold and difficult choice for both of us. Each of us gave significant time and energy to this work and it should be noted with unqualified success from time to time. It was Lloyd's article in *Art in America* in 1972 that greatly inspired me and it was during that summer he appeared on the *Today Show* with Barbara Walters who interviewed him. We worked together for about 4 years thereafter and over the years our paths crossed a number of times. My thoughts go to the work at the American Art Gallery, the excitement, the laughter, the artists and the struggle we experienced. Lloyd was brilliant and he could be difficult but his

achievements are undeniable. I will miss that man I was privileged to call a friend and fellow artist."

Diane Fraher, founder of Amerinda, Inc in NYC: "I knew Lloyd my whole adult life in New York. I learned so much from him. He was wise, witty and brilliant and it will be hard to go on without him. As Native people so much of our history has been lost. I'm honored and grateful that AMERINDA was able to document his accomplishments in Native arts. Over the years I came to see a vulnerable part of him that he kept hidden. He would have been so surprised to see how much we Native people, and how so many of us, appreciate him. Thanks Lloyd!"

Nadema Agard, a longtime artist and supporter of Indian Arts in NYC: "Lloyd was one of the most important people in my life as a Native artist in NYC. He was an incredibly accomplished individual and I always felt he had my back. This is a tremendous loss for myself and all who knew him. Lloyd was also a friend whose droll sense of humor cannot be surpassed in my estimation. He was a one of a kind. His later accomplishments at the Metropolitan Museum of Art were quite important. I recommended that he join the Multicultural Advisory Committee and he did. During that time he organized honorings of Maria Tallchief and Richie Havens. R.I. P. dear Native artist brother."

Somewhere in Indian Country today, artists, historians and educators are hard at work, and I hope one day in the not far off future, they will be presented with an award named to honor the work of Lloyd Oxendine.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/27/lloyd-oxendine-native-american-arts-advocate-walks-161545>

How an Indigenous Group Is Battling Construction of the Nicaragua Canal

The Rama community's efforts offer a glimmer of hope for opponents of the canal project planned by a Chinese billionaire



The Rama travel their coastal homeland with wooden dories and small motorboats, which would be eclipsed by megaships traversing the Nicaragua Canal. (Emily Liedel)

By Emily Liedel
smithsonian.com
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This article is from Hakai Magazine , an online publication about science and society in coastal ecosystems. Read more stories like this at hakaimagazine.com.

On a Sunday morning on the Nicaraguan island of Rama Cay, Becky McCray visits with her family in her parents' home over a breakfast of beans, coconut rice, coconut bread, and thick coffee, with the grounds still swimming in the bottom of the cup. The food was prepared over an open fire in a wall-less kitchen building; the aroma of coffee mingles with the wood smoke and the salty sea breeze.

Like other traditional homes built by the Rama, Nicaragua's smallest indigenous group, McCray's parents' wooden home sits on stilts. The planks of the floor and walls are fitted together loosely, so you can see chickens scratching underneath from inside. The roof is made of thatched palm leaves and the windows are square holes, with solid wood shutters to close out violent evening winds.

Ten of McCray's 11 adult siblings still live on Rama Cay, a 22-hectare island that rises from the water like a set of oversized goggles about a kilometer and a half off Nicaragua's Caribbean coast. The island is home to roughly half of the Rama's 2,000 or so community members; McCray and another sister traveled from Bluefields, the closest city, 20 minutes by motorboat up the coast. Some of their children, aged two through 11, race through the house. The family members joke with one another in Rama English (also known as Rama Cay Kriol), the native language for most members of the Rama community. This English creole is incomprehensible to speakers of standard English.

One brother talks about his upcoming fishing trip—he'll fish from a traditional wooden dory on the open ocean and sell his catch on the mainland. Fishing is his primary source of income, as is common for Rama men. Elsewhere on the island, both men and women are preparing their canoes for a trip inland to plant corn, beans, and breadfruit in their farmland.

Unlike most Rama, Becky McCray has a college degree and speaks fluent Spanish. In between laughing with her siblings and nephews, she discusses her work as a legal defender for indigenous communities in Nicaragua's Caribbean region. Recently, most of her personal and professional energy has been focused on protecting the Rama's territory from being bisected by an interoceanic canal.

“Where they are going to put the canal is where our people go to fish. They survive by that,” she says.

The Rama's territory, along Nicaragua's Caribbean coast, stretches roughly from the Costa Rican border north to just south of Bluefields. Their territory is shared with the Kriols, descendants of Africans who adopted the Rama way of life centuries ago. The Rama-Kriols hold a communal title not only to the nine settlements where community members live, but also to the 4,843-square-kilometer territory where they fish, hunt, and farm. If current construction plans for the canal go ahead, that territory will be severed in two.

The massive Nicaragua Canal planned by a secretive Chinese billionaire, Wang Jing, and managed by his company, the Hong Kong Nicaragua Development Group (HKND), will stretch from the Pacific coast, across Lake Nicaragua, to the Caribbean coast and is destined to wipe at least one Rama village off the map. It will also make travel between the northern and southern parts of the territory impossible, at least as the Rama travel now, in small motorboats and wooden canoes. The Rama's fishing grounds will no longer be safe in the path of 400-meter-long megaships approaching the canal. Rama farming techniques involve elaborate field rotation and substantial travel to reach the fields; the canal will both reduce the available farmland and render much of it inaccessible.

Although the Rama community is among the least powerful groups in Nicaragua, an international court case currently underway gives them and other canal opponents a glimmer of hope.



The proposed route of the Nicaragua Canal cuts across the country and bisects Rama-Kriol territory. (Mark Garrison)

Nowhere is concern about the canal more acute than the village of Bangkukuk Taik, about two to three hours south of Rama Cay by motorboat over the open ocean. The isolated village is home to about 140 people, including 15 or so who still speak Rama, an indigenous language in the Chibchan family related to languages spoken as far south as Colombia. Bangkukuk Taik is among the most isolated of the nine villages in the Rama-Kriol territory and is the only place where there are regular classes in Rama for children. The Rama in Bangkukuk Taik have the deepest knowledge of traditional farming, hunting, and medicine, like how to hunt deer at night and how to collect *iibu* seeds and use the oil as a cough and headache medicine.

Under the current canal route, Bangkukuk Taik will become the canal's Caribbean-side deep-water port and will be called Punta de Águila. (Bangkukuk Taik means "Eagle

Point” in Rama; Punta de Águila has the same meaning in Spanish.) The wooden houses on stilts will—critics assume, based on the proposed port location—be destroyed and replaced by high-rises and port infrastructure. It’s hard to imagine people used to walking barefoot and hunting and fishing for their livelihood fitting into the slick, modern city represented in mock-ups of what the finished Punta de Águila will look like. The current residents of Bangkukuk Taik will be forced to move.

McCray has been trying to prevent that from happening for more than two years. The day before the canal concession law was adopted by the National Assembly, in June 2013, she and four other members of the Rama-Kriol Territorial Government traveled from Bluefields to the capital, Managua. They hoped to testify against the law they feared would destroy the traditional way of life in the Rama territory.

Just as their bus to Managua was preparing to depart, three police officers boarded and demanded McCray and her companions gather their belongings and disembark. McCray insisted on seeing the police officers’ identification. They refused. After a tense 10-minute standoff, the group was allowed to go. The following day, McCray and her companions watched in dismay as the law was adopted. “We didn’t get a chance to say anything,” McCray remembers. “They didn’t respect us, they didn’t give us a chance to defend what we were claiming.”

Nicaraguan human rights lawyer Maria Luisa Acosta is McCray’s primary source of legal support and has represented the Rama in all of their legal challenges related to territory since the late 1990s. Acosta filed a legal challenge to the canal concession law on July 1, 2013, just weeks after it was approved. Like the 31 other legal challenges to the law—based on environmental factors, human rights, and national sovereignty—the Rama’s legal case was dismissed. The Supreme Court said the lawsuits were invalid because the law passed the National Assembly with a wide majority and because the major development project took precedence. (Acosta and other canal opponents think the challenges failed because Nicaragua’s Supreme Court is controlled by the ruling Sandinistas.)

According to both international and Nicaraguan law, indigenous people must give their “free, informed, and prior consent” to any project that will affect the community’s territory or way of life. According to Manuel Coronel Kautz, the president of Nicaragua’s Canal Authority, the National Assembly had documents from the Rama-Kriol government giving permission for the canal to be constructed prior to the vote that granted the concession—though he has not been able to produce those documents. Telemaco Talavera, the spokesperson for the Canal Commission, has similarly stated to the Nicaraguan press that the Canal Commission has all the necessary permission from the Rama-Kriol to carry out studies and other actions on their territory.

The Rama-Kriol government disagrees. In a press release just after Talavera’s announcement, it clarified that it had provided permission solely for environmental and social-impact studies. The first permit was granted in November 2013—several months *after* the concession was signed into law. The Rama-Kriol government claims that it

yielded to pressure from the national government and only granted the permit after environmental consultants contracted by HKND and escorted by the military entered Rama territory, causing alarm within the communities.

Citing the government's failure to obtain free, informed, and prior consent to use Rama-Kriol lands as part of the canal construction before passing the concession law, Acosta filed a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in June 2014. The following December, she asked the IACHR for precautionary measures, which would prevent work from proceeding on the canal until the Rama had been properly consulted. The IACHR is a part of the Organization of American States and hears complaints about human rights abuses from around the Americas.

In March, Acosta, McCray, and five other canal opponents traveled to Washington, DC, for the IACHR hearing. McCray represented the six indigenous groups whose territory is affected by the canal route; the others spoke about canal-related environmental impacts, police repression of protesters, and other human-rights violations. McCray was nervous as she read her remarks in Spanish. She cited three articles in the concession law that explicitly give the Canal Commission the right to expropriate indigenous land, and then she accused the government of violating international norms in the way it conducted community consultations, perhaps most blatantly by paying villagers—many of whom are illiterate—to come to the meetings. (Those villagers, Acosta claims, were then pressured into signing documents that they could not understand.)

Thomas Antkowiak, a law professor at Seattle University and a specialist in the Inter-American human-rights system, believes the Rama's case against the canal is, under international and even Nicaraguan law, ironclad. But that doesn't mean the IACHR will halt canal construction, which officially began in December 2014 on the Pacific coast, or order that the concession law be changed or overturned. Like other international organizations, the IACHR depends on its member states. In lower-profile cases, Antkowiak says, member states usually abide by the commission's decisions. However, when international law conflicts with a high-profile project, it's more complicated.

In the case of Belo Monte, a major hydroelectric dam in Brazil's Amazon, indigenous leaders filed a complaint in front of the IACHR in 2010, and in 2011 the commission found in their favor, ordering the Brazilian government to stop all construction on the dam until the indigenous communities had been properly consulted. The Brazilian government announced that it would ignore the ruling and subsequently broke off its relationship with both the commission and the Organization of American States. The IACHR then backtracked, saying in a statement that the indigenous leaders' complaints were not really about the lack of consultation but about whether or not the dam should be constructed at all. The commission removed its requirement that the government consult with the indigenous groups.

In the Nicaragua Canal case, the IACHR issued a summary of the March proceedings in late June, which included a confirmation that the commission had asked the Nicaraguan government for proof that they adequately consulted with the Rama and studied the

environmental impacts. In Acosta's view, this is a step in the right direction. "It's the first time someone is demanding that the government provide information," she says. "None of the [other] international organizations or regulators have done so yet."

The deadline for Nicaragua to respond to the request is confidential and is released neither to the press nor to the petitioners. As of publication, neither the Nicaraguan representatives nor the IACHR will comment on where the case stands. When it's issued, the actual reply from the Nicaraguan government—which the IACHR will base its recommendations on—will also be confidential. If the government fails to respond or ignores the recommendations, the commission can recommend that the case proceed to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, based in San José, Costa Rica. The court's rulings are legally binding for the 25 states that have accepted its jurisdiction—which includes Nicaragua.

Although the concession agreement with HKND doesn't make any special references to indigenous territories, Kautz, the president of Nicaragua's Canal Authority, insists that indigenous peoples will be treated differently than regular landowners. Aside from the Rama, whose territory will likely be the most impacted, at least four other indigenous groups will face disruption if the canal proceeds. Nicaraguan law explicitly bars indigenous land from being bought or sold; that means the land will be rented, not expropriated, says Kautz. Yet, critics say that because this is not expressly stated in the concession law, the land is vulnerable to seizure.

In fact, Acosta and other opponents say that, as written, the canal concession law gives HKND the right to expropriate land anywhere in the country, regardless of whether or not the canal is built. Acosta worries that the Rama will lose their territory—displaced by golf courses and beach resorts—even if the Nicaragua Canal is never built.

The last time the Rama territory was seriously threatened was in the late 1990s, when the Nicaraguan government planned a dry canal (an overland route for cargo) that would have bisected the community's territory. Legal challenges against the dry canal were unsuccessful, but it was never built for political and economic reasons.

Maybe the Rama will dodge unwanted development a second time. But it will take a sustained fight from the community and international support. The case at the IACHR is probably the Rama's best chance for meaningful international intervention, but it remains to be seen whether or not this glimmer of hope is enough to protect their territory and keep their culture alive.

This article originally appeared under the headline ["The Rama Versus the Canal."](#)

Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-indigenous-group-battling-construction-nicaragua-canal-180956418/#gKqGsZp7zlK4yT9J.99>

Fitness, pride is potent combination for indigenous women's group

KWESTRONG triathlon is a centerpiece event, drawing many from tribes across the Midwest.

By Mackenzie Lobby Havey Special to the Star Tribune
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Gallery: Women, mostly Native American, stood in line to smudge sage before completing the 2015 KWESTRONG women's triathlon, Saturday, August 22, 2015 in Minneapolis, MN. The triathlon, which started with canoeing across Lake Calhoun and back, also included a 9-mile bike ride, and a choice between a 5k and a 10k run.

The sight of 166 American Indian women and girls paddling across the calm waters of Lake Calhoun in the early hours of Saturday morning represented an intersection of past, present and future.

Clad in brightly colored life jackets, the women ranged in age from 9 to 70 and came from tribes in Iowa, Nebraska, Canada and elsewhere. They put in their silver aluminum canoes on the south beach and paddled north in the direction of the shops, bars, restaurants and high-rises of Uptown.

They tread on what once was native land — Dakota to be specific. Long before the European settlers arrived, Lake Calhoun was largely surrounded by wetlands and known by its ancestral name: Mde Maka Ska, or “White Earth Lake.” Back then, the native people who lived in the region fished and harvested wild rice from the lake, as well as gardened on nearby lands.

Today, the bustling Calhoun has a different makeup, so the vision of indigenous women making their way together across the lake was striking. Taking part in what is known as the KweStrong Triathlon, women came together for a fourth year to compete in the canoe-bike-run event. “Kwe” is the Ojibwe word for “woman.”

Founded in 2010, KweStrong is the idea of Korina Barry, 28, a member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and twin sisters Lisa and Lucie Skjefte, both 33 and belonging to

the Red Lake Nation. Runners themselves, they found that they were constantly getting questions from other indigenous women about how and where to work out in the city. This inspired them to start the triathlon with a goal of inspiring women to be healthy and physically active.

“When we first started this, there were a lot of races every weekend, but we didn’t see many women of color and native women, so we wanted to create a space for that,” said Barry, who is the director of outreach at the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare at the University of Minnesota’s School of Social Work.



Jane Rea Bruce, left, and Mary Jo Fairbanks made their way across a choppy Lake Calhoun.

“At the time, we didn’t know anything about permits, and none of us had ever participated in a triathlon or any other race where there was registration and bib numbers,” recalled Lisa Skjefte, who is the Indian community liaison for Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota. “Even still, we ended up with almost 80 women participating, and the beauty of what we witnessed was amazing — 30 canoes with women and their daughters and children.”

That single event ended up blossoming into something much larger. KweStrong does weekly canoe instruction each summer on Lake Calhoun, and in the winter the group organizes a snowshoe race. In the process it has gained support from local Indian leaders and others, like Wheels of Fun, which offer equipment, and Allina Hospitals, which provides sponsorship.

The women say that creating a community of active Indian women has been important, not just for those they’ve recruited to participate in KweStrong events but also for themselves.

“There’s something that happens when I’m running and I reach that point of wanting to break down and then all of a sudden I find strength in the people I run with,” Lisa Skjefte said. “Suddenly everything becomes clear — the water sparkles brighter and the trees shine more. Even if my mind wants to give up, my connection to this land and other native women is strong and I know I can do it.”

With canoeing being a fundamental part of the KweStrong event docket, she said women draw a significant sense of ancestral strength from the local lakes and rivers.

“I tell the women that it’s in our blood. We are expert canoeists; it’s written into our bloodline and is so important to our way of life and who we are as native people,” she added.

Through the triathlon and other events, KweStrong is working to emphasize the importance of creating a legacy of health and community engagement for Indian women. It’s about helping women connect to their heritage, while lighting the way for a brighter future.

Indeed, there were plenty of examples of the KweStrong mission at work last Saturday. After participating in the triathlon last year, Valerie LaFave, 51, of Red Lake Nation challenged her daughter, granddaughter and several cousins to compete, also bringing her mom along for support and encouragement.

“Being among the other Native American women at the triathlon last year was really empowering, and I wanted my daughter and granddaughter to experience that too,” she said. “I wanted to lead by example and show them that anything is possible.”

“We envision a healthy, vibrant community, not just for the ones here and now, but for our future generations,” Lisa Skjefte said.

Mackenzie Lobby Havey is a freelance writer. She lives in Minneapolis.

Direct Link: <http://www.startribune.com/fitness-history-intermix-for-american-indian-women-s-group/323100841/>

Time to Choose: Sovereignty or Re-Colonization?

[Mike Myers](#)

8/25/15

I want to thank Russell Diabo for his most recent edition of the “First Nations Strategic Bulletin” and the raising of the critical issue contained in the phrase “Choosing A Path: Self Determination or Re-Colonization”. Ever since the first UN/NGO conference on Indigenous nations and peoples in 1977 there has been a long simmering tension that is reflected in this phrase. It is a tension that exists between the positions taken by Indigenous nationalists and what I term “Indigenous Accommodationists” - those who are arguing with the settlers to be more accommodating to our presence and rights but want to stay within some sort of settler defined framework.

This tension has become ever more pronounced with the inclusion of Indigenous peoples from other regions. One of the defining differences is that we have treaties throughout North America where in most parts of the rest of the world there are none. Another difference arises in the fact that many so-called Indigenous peoples - particularly from Africa and Asia - come from countries that are no longer colonies or settler states such as we have in North America. That struggle is very different from ours and the origin of the issues lies in the fact that they liberated or de-colonized the colonial imposed countries that have nothing to do with the original nations in those regions. It doesn't appear that any effort has been made to re-constitute the original nations so what exists is an Indigenous imposed re-colonization of the territory mostly to the benefit of the majority Indigenous within those colonial boundaries. Definitely a lesson we need to learn and a trap we need to avoid.

I have watched a steady eroding of the Indigenous nationalist position over the years. This erosion has been insidious because of the various ways it occurs. First, there is the representation of Indigenous nation issues by organizations and not the nations themselves. Nation voices have been methodically and systematically diminished by the actions of organizations and individuals purporting to be acting on behalf of nations.

The second, and even more insidious erosion, has been political correctness. "Unity" and "solidarity" have become the saboteurs of Indigenous nationalism because all too often nationalist are having to give up key positions and principles for the sake of unity and/or solidarity with non-nationalists. The tyranny of "being united" or "showing a common front" has cost the efforts of nationalists dearly. Precious time has been lost hammering out accommodations and concessions with the non-nationalists that ultimately do not advance a nationalist agenda or the liberation of our nations.

"Liberation" is a very scary word for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. For Indigenous folks who still harbor deep seated fears of the settlers the word invokes images of being at war, or some form of violent repression by the settlers.

For non-Indigenous it's a word that reminds them that their presence in and occupation of our territories and homelands is still at question. To try and safeguard themselves from Indigenous efforts at re-establishing our nations they have fought for and gotten such terminology as found in **Article 46 1. of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**: "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States."

There are some important UN reports on self-determination and its relationship to the issues and rights of Indigenous nations and peoples. In his 2013 report to the UN Human Rights Council, Special Rapporteur Alfred-Maurice de Zayas made the following observations: "In its essence, the right of self-determination means that individuals and peoples should be in control of their destinies and should be able to live out their

identities, whether within the boundaries of existing States or through independence... Although territorial integrity is a reasonable principle of international stability, it is not an immutable norm of international relations and must be balanced against other principles, including human rights and self-determination, which are also conditions for international stability.”

These issues had been raised as early as 1980 as found in the report by Special Rapporteur Hector Gros Espiell in which he states: “The Special Rapporteur refers to this specific subject of secession in another part of his study (see para. 90). Despite their variations, these replies reveal a common view which the Special Rapporteur shares: that “colonial and alien domination” means any kind of domination, whatever form it may take, which the people concerned freely regards as such. It entails denial of the right to self-determination, to a people possessing that right, by an external, alien source. Conversely, colonial and alien domination does not exist where a people lives freely and voluntarily under the legal order of a State, whose territorial integrity must be respected, provided it is real and not merely a legal fiction...”

Both Canada and the U.S. have made moves to diminish the international concept of self-determination in its application to Indigenous nations and peoples. And they have fought against its application to our issues since 1977.

We've reached a point where we need to choose a path, and be clear about the choice we make. We've been shown this in our prophecies and teachings such as those shared by the Hopi or the Haudenosaunee Two Row Wampum. This needs to be sorted out in North America where the tension is most pronounced. If one wants to continue to beseech the settlers and the international system to be more accommodating of the presence of Indigenous peoples, fine. But those who choose that path need not stand in the way of those who choose a national liberation path, or require the setting aside of the national liberation agenda for the sake of a short term unity that is untenable over the long term.

When this world was created each of our nations and peoples were placed exactly where they were intended to be. With this placement came our rights and responsibilities regarding our relations to all other Life and that part of our Mother we are born from. This is the basis of our inherent rights and sovereignty. And no other human has the right to try and extinguish our existence or our rights which flow from the fact of our creation.

Mike Myers is the founder and CEO of Network for Native Futures, a Native non-profit that works with Indigenous nations, communities and organizations internationally. The network's mission is to support sustainable development and nation re-building through providing of technical assistance, training and consulting.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/25/time-choose-sovereignty-or-re-colonization>